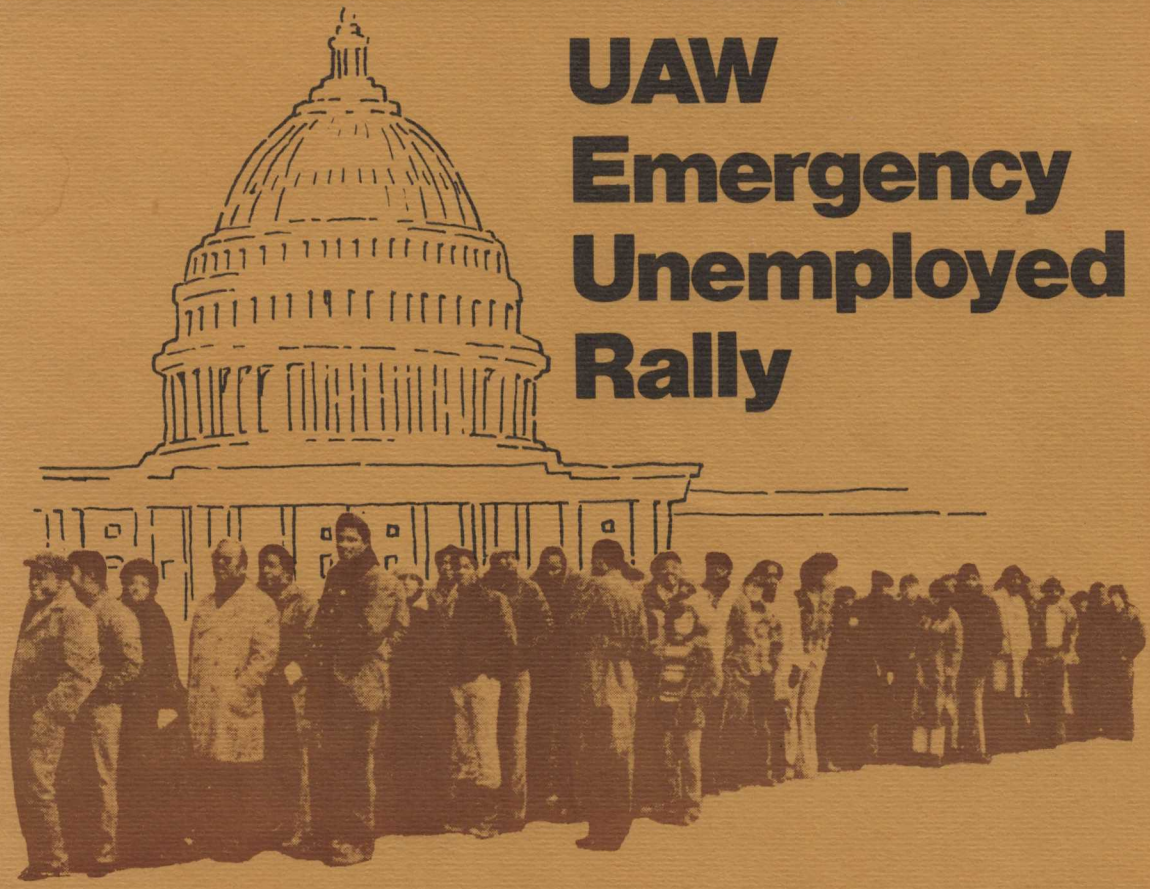
No. 1 February—March, 1975 50c

network

Voice of UAW Militants



UAW Emergency Unemployed Rally

Those Who Fight Back: A documentary of the St. Louis struggle by Nate Mosely as told to Joe Fine.

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Editorial

On February 5th, Washington D.C. will be the scene of one of the most important UAW sponsored activities in many years—**a mass demonstration for jobs.** We can expect the Woodcock Administration to make every effort to tightly control the events in Washington. They will attempt to limit its slogans, demands and militancy. They will try to blunt its force as a statement by working people that we are preparing for a fight on all fronts, political and economic, to force the corporations and government to provide all working people work and full wages.

The demonstration was called because the UAW leadership has been under growing pressure from the ranks to act. And Feb 5 will be a breakthrough despite Woodcock. The new anger and militancy of the UAW membership is building a fire under the Woodcock leadership.

This new mood breaks out in many ways:

1) Local caucuses opposed to the UAW bureaucracy are growing. Politics in many locals rises above hassles between personality cliques and slates. New caucuses are offering **alternative policies.**

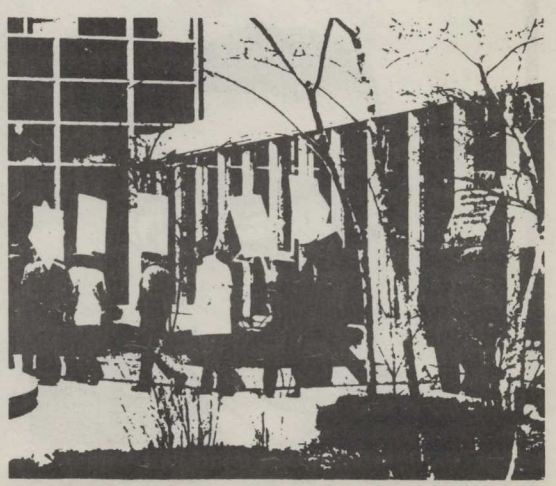
2) Many groups are already aware of the stranglehold the International Executive Board has on all levels of the union. These groups see the need for a national organization. Many are coming together in the United National Caucus—the only real national grouping inside the UAW opposed the policies of Woodcock.

3) Rank and file members are taking a deeper look at political questions.

4) Growing numbers of UAW office holders are starting to make militant speeches. So-called "friends of labor" in the Democratic Party echo their talk in watered-down versions. Both groups are merely reacting to—not leading—the new mood among rank and file auto workers today.

The 1974 UAW Constitutional Convention was the end of an era in one regard—the membership will at future conventions no longer face a solid, one-party leadership. We expect to see the Woodcock/Fraser/Greathouse bloc split by 1977. But split or not, that whole bureaucracy that led us into the present crisis will face a real, sizeable opposition. The United National Caucus, the local opposition groupings, the Independent Skilled Trades Council (UAW), Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), organizations of blacks and other minority workers—they will all play a part.

We are talking about a **movement** of autoworkers. One which will reject the basis of the Reuther/Woodcock leadership: that is, the idea that our welfare is dependent on the Big Three's ability to make a profit. Many **Network** readers will be leaders in this movement. The Woodcock team's policy of defending corporate interests are the reason they have **nothing** to



Rank and file picket line at UAW Convention.

say now. But the ranks do. We want decent jobs at decent pay for all. And any attempt to stop us from getting them or from uniting all auto workers will be fought. The United National Caucus program has fighting ideas along the lines we need now.

Still, there is a lack of communication among the members and groups fighting to rebuild our union. In the fall of 1973 when a 1,000 person UAW goon squad broke a strike at Chrysler's Mack Avenue Stamping, it took months before the news got around. Some people still don't know the facts. This cannot go on. The companies know what's going on. The Union bureaucracy know's what's happening. The government knows what's happening. We must too.

Network is being published as a contribution towards pulling together a militant, rank and file movement throughout the UAW. A movement to challenge the corrupt leadership and lead effective action in defense of the union membership. We decided to put out this magazine so that UAW militants from different local unions could begin a serious exchange of experiences and ideas. The editors will bring their own ideas in. Even more, we need your ideas and experiences.

Network is not a caucus. All members of the **Network** editorial board are members of the United National Caucus of the UAW and we urge all our readers to join the UNC. But **Network** will have its own role to play as a center for discussion, ideas and interchange.

For these reasons we are proud to publish this first issue of **Network.**

(The views of the **Network** Editorial Board on building a movement inside the UAW to fight for economic justice are put forward in greater detail in **An Autoworker's Program For Economic Survival,** in this issue of **Network.**)

Whose Side Is He On?

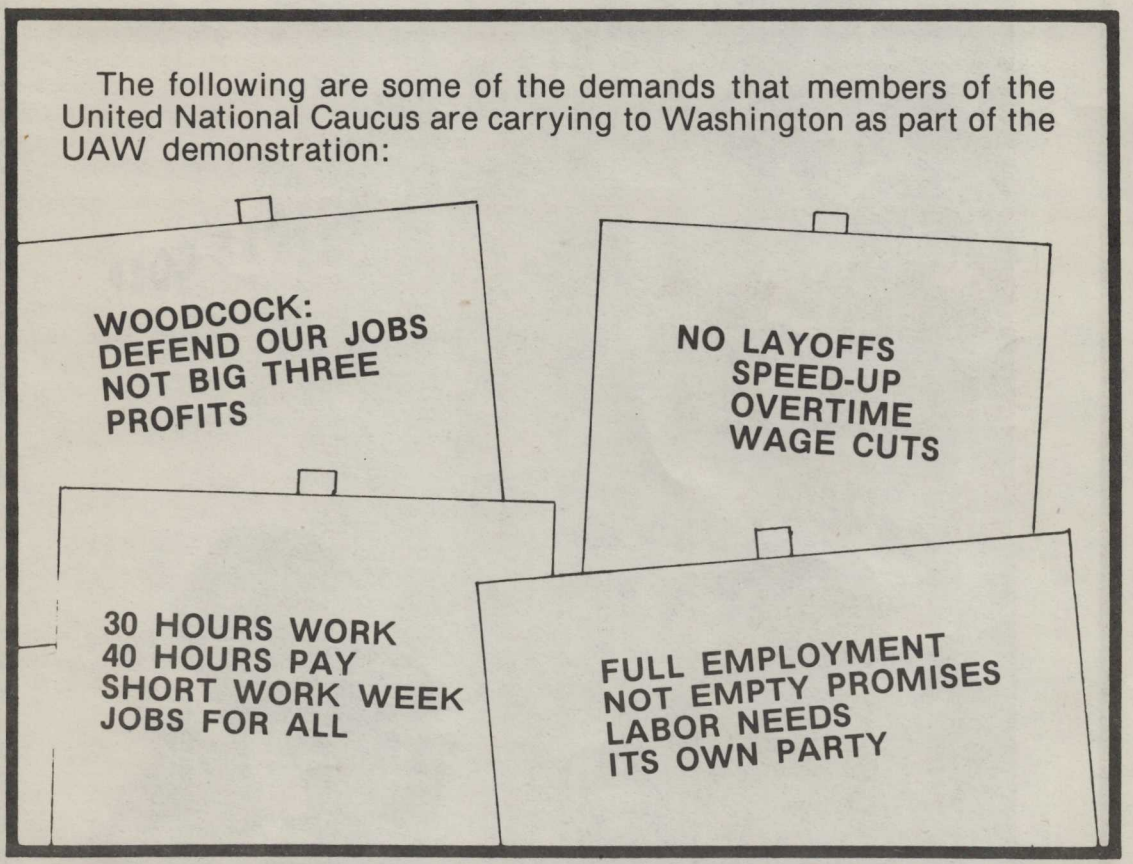
On Sunday, Jan. 26, on nationally televised **Meet The Press,** UAW President Leonard Woodcock showed the world that his concern for big three profits was greater than his concern for the welfare of the UAW membership. He argued that the auto companies could not be expected to permanently hold down prices because their profits were too low already. He even implied that UAW members would be willing to take wage cuts if this was needed.

Woodcock stated that when companies are in a bad economic position, it is the policy of the UAW to go easy on them. This is a promis that he has no intention of attempting to force them to bail out the SUB program when it goes broke; a promise that he has no intention of pressing in 1976 contract negotiations to get back the money we lost to inflation.

During hard economic times like these, either the workers or the companies have to suffer the consequences of the economic crisis. The companies, of course, would rather we pay than them. They squeeze us with layoffs, speed-up, and inflationary attacks on our wages. Woodcock's nice sounding promise to go easy means that instead of organizing our defense he wants to throw in the towel. The ranks will have to organize and say NO!! □

UAW March On Washington

The following are some of the demands that members of the United National Caucus are carrying to Washington as part of the UAW demonstration:



February 5

Those Who Fight Back

A Documentary of the Struggle at St. Louis GMAD

by Nate Mosely as told to Joe Fine

Anyone who has ever worked on an assembly line knows the power of this vast machine over its human servants. You can stay out of its grasp by calling in sick; a large group of united workers can even walk out. But as long as you're there, you are chained to the line. When it goes, so do you.

For a brief moment, on October 17th of last year, workers at the GM Corvette plant in St. Louis turned everything upside down. The assembly line was going, but they weren't. They sat down.

The action was taken after lunch by workers when they found their checks lacked call-in pay for the previous Wednesday, when they had reported but had been sent home because of a parts shortage.

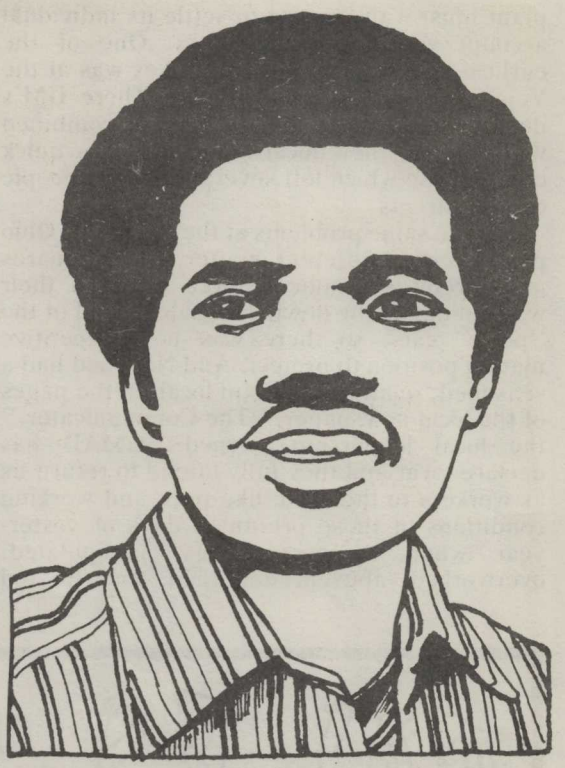
When the workers first complained about the missing money, management replied that no call-in pay was due since the company had paid for spot radio announcements instructing workers not to report. Refusing to accept this as "proper notification," the workers reviewed their options: a grievance would take forever and might well be settled in favor of the company, a walkout would cost people the four hours pay at stake and would probably be only an ineffective protest. They decided on a direct power confrontation, and sat down.

Management quickly stopped the line and came to the workers. They alternately pleaded and threatened in attempting to return the matter to ordinary procedures. The shop committeeman from Corvette came down to do the same. The workers refused to return to work. After 20 minutes, the shift superintendent guaranteed their pay and they started up again. The line ran substantially slower the rest of the night.

Such a swift and direct defeat for management is uncommon in any UAW plant these days. What made it remarkable was that only a few weeks before the rank and file had been apathetic and disunited following a serious defeat in a nine week strike. The quick turnabout from retreat to advance is a tribute to the experience and the rank and file organization developed in three years of struggle against the General Motors Assembly Division (GMAD) management in St. Louis.

HOW IT ALL STARTED

GMAD was a direct result of the 1970 contract sellout. In exchange for a few concessions, the Woodcock leadership gave the green light for a new "cost-cutting" campaign by management. By merging the Fisher Body and Chevy assembly divisions at 18 assembly plants around the country, GM was able to nullify existing local contracts. An agressive campaign by a "hard-nosed" management would eliminate workers and force an inferior combined agreement. The St. Louis complex where Corvettes, Chevrolet pickup trucks, and Chevrolet passenger cars are built in adjacent buildings, "went GMAD" October 1, 1971. Within one year, over one thousand of the plants' 9200 workers had been laid off with no cut in production. When workers proved unable to keep up, they were disciplined. This viciousness and the rebellion against it led to the accumulation of 12,300 grievances by October 1972. The demand from the rank and file for action mounted. St. Louis was among the last plants to go GMAD while at others the struggle was already in full swing. Leonard Woodcock, UAW president, took the position that the UAW strike fund could afford strike benefits for only one plant at a time, so each

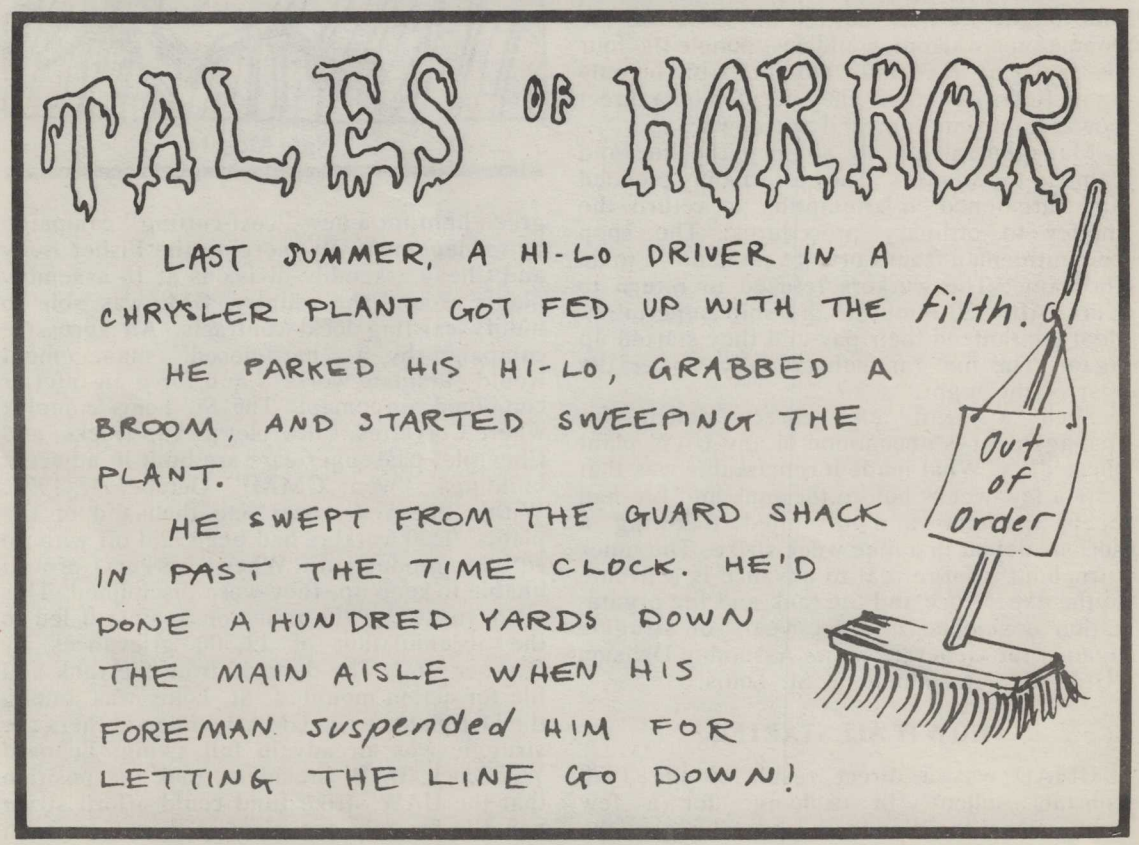


Nate Mosely

plant must wait its turn to settle its individual account with General Motors. One of the earliest and most publicized strikes was at the Vega plant in Lordstown, Ohio. There GM's desire to get Vegas on the market combined with a weak, new local union led to a quick compromise which left several hundred people on the streets.

But the same problems at the Norwood, Ohio plant were a different matter. The Camaros and Firebirds produced there were on their way out due to the downward sales trend of the "pony" cars, so there was no competitive market position to protect. And Norwood had a seasoned, relatively militant local. In the pages of the local newspaper, "The Communicator," the local leadership warned "GMAD has declared war and they fully intend to return us as workers to the slave-like pace and working conditions of those pre-union days of yesteryear when a worker was manipulated, overworked, abused, degraded, and treated like a common work animal by employers gone mad in their lust for greater profits...GMAD, you have a lesson to learn here at Norwood, and the quicker you learn it, the better off everyone will be...Please read and heed. Mr. GMAD: it can save you a lot of grief and a lot of profit, for this is one war you are not going to win. Stop or be stopped: the choice is yours."

When GMAD refused to heed, Norwood hit the bricks. Woodcock told the local it was on its own, and quietly predicted a long strike. This amounted to a signed OK on GM's plan to smash all resistance and to make an example of Norwood. The workers at Norwood courageously tried to make good their pledge, repeatedly refusing to return to work without any concessions from the company, but with 22 assembly plants operating and only one shut down, GM could afford to wait. The United National Caucus (UNC), a UAW rank and file opposition group, tried to aid the Norwood strikers by publicizing the strike, raising funds,


TALES OF HORROR
LAST SUMMER, A HI-LO DRIVER IN A CHRYSLER PLANT GOT FED UP WITH THE filth.
HE PARKED HIS HI-LO, GRABBED A BROOM, AND STARTED SWEEPING THE PLANT.
HE SWEPT FROM THE GUARD SHACK IN PAST THE TIME CLOCK. HE'D DONE A HUNDRED YARDS DOWN THE MAIN AISLE WHEN HIS FOREMAN suspended HIM FOR LETTING THE LINE GO DOWN!
Out of Order

organizing press conferences and public meetings to demand that Solidarity House (UAW Headquarters) live up to its name. But the UAW officials kept the strike isolated for 26 weeks, amid threats that GM would close the plant entirely, the workers went back defeated.

THE APPACHE STRATEGY

GMAD boss Joseph Godfrey seems to have thought that at this point the leaders of the other locals, terrified of being smashed this way, would roll over and play dead. The pressure from below for action was so great that they began to demand a change in tactics instead. And the pressure was greatest in St. Louis where the Local 25 President and Shop Committee Chairman were sent to the October 1972 GMAD Subcouncil meeting with a mandate to propose the following ultimatum to GM:

1) That all 18 GMAD plants strike together, "One for all, all for one" until all locals had settled, and

2) if this doesn't achieve rapid results then all truck plants (trucks were selling well then and heavy overtime was being worked) be shut down too.

To the amazement of Woodcock and Irving Blueston (head of the UAW's GM Department) the presidents and local chairmen of the GMAD locals passed this program. Mr. Woodcock immediately called for a recess, went into a back room, and three hours later emerged saying, "I have an even greater program! We are going to institute Program Apache. There will be no more Norwoods; whenever one plant goes out, 15 more will join it!" Woodcock and Bluestone paraded for an hour and forty five minutes up on the podium and Local 25's resolution which had previously passed, was now, you might say—bypassed. The local leaders, surprised by their own daring, scrambled back to subservience.

APPACHE STRIKE AT ST. LOUIS

When Local 25 held its mass strike authorization meeting, Woodcock came down to repeat his pledge, "No more Norwoods. We're going to strike this monster 17 to 25 plants at a time. We're going to strike GM like they've never been struck before!"

Well, he sure did strike them. Out of 50 five day letters (strike warning letters required by the Paragraph 117 no-strike clause), he permitted five plants to strike on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, and then return to work on Tuesday. St. Louis went out on strike and was ordered back after four days **without a single one of its 12,300 grievances resolved.** The same thing happened in one plant after another, formenting disgust and anger, and Local 25 began an active campaign among other locals for solidarity which seems to have had some effect (maybe GM was afraid striking workers wouldn't return another time). On October 27th GMAD in St. Louis settled some 10,300 grievances. With 2,000 left in the procedure including work standards (Paragraph 78) and discharges, Woodcock cancelled the strike at St. Louis three hours before it was scheduled to go out. GM immediately refused to settle any more grievances. In spite of 2,000 unresolved grievances and no agreement to replace the nullified one, Local 25 President Ed Lavin announced a "new contract" and called a membership meeting to get this "new contract" ratified. Over four hundred workers showed up for the afternoon shift's meeting and, under the leadership of Committeeman Mosley, voted overwhelmingly to reject the agreement as no new contract had been signed. At the evening meeting for the day shift 125 workers showed up and without leadership, were tricked into thinking a new contract had been reached. Lavin then called a press conference, and throwing the 2nd shift votes into the wastebasket, announced that 95% had approved the "contract."

This agreement was to go into effect November 6th and 800 laid off workers were called back. But management refused to implement some settlements, and implemented others merely by taking work off of one job and putting it on another. When workers again couldn't keep up, management declared "sabotage" and began sending the 2nd shift home every night after 2½ to 3 hours, while the 1st shift continued to work 8 hours. That this was a calculated attempt to divide the older, predominantly white day shift from the younger, more black night shift was proved when committeemen showed that extra manpower was placed on identical jobs on the day shift. The line also was being stopped at intervals during the day shift to let the workers catch up!

Naturally grievances began to pile up again.

[Continued on page 32]

Mark Levitan

The United National Caucus Unemployed Committee

At the time that Chrysler let out that they were considering closing Jefferson Assembly, and before the massive Chrysler layoffs had been announced, members of the United National Caucus began mapping out plans for organizing to fight the layoffs. It was hoped that some of the local union presidents from Detroit area Chrysler plants might feel obliged to act in defense of their membership. Although there was a difference of opinion as to what the response would be, on November 8 Jordan Simms, United National Caucus Co-chairman and president of Local 961, Chrysler Eldon Ave. Gear and Axle, mailed out a letter to all Detroit area local union presidents from Chrysler plants inviting them to meeting at his local hall. (the letter is reprinted on page 13.)

The letter was sent out in his capacity as local union president and with the approval of his Local Executive Board. It was hoped that even if the presidents would be unwilling to do anything associated with an opposition caucus, they might at least come to a meeting to discuss taking action. When the day of the meeting came, no a single one of the local union presidents arrived. It was clear that they were only willing to act under the immediate direction of the International union leadership. And at the time, the leadership hadn't done a thing.

As a result of this experience the United National Caucus Unemployed Committee was formed on a Detroit regional basis. UAW members from a dozen different locals have participated. Some of them (from locals: 600 Tool and Die, 160 Styling, 961, and 235) have been participating with knowledge and approval of their units or local union leadership. The rest are local union members who are part of opposition caucuses in their locals, or are individuals in opposition to their local union leadership.

HARD TIMES

The Committee strives to press inside the UAW on the local, regional, and international level for the most effective programs to fight unemployment and to give aid to laid off members. It also strives to organize its own independent activities programs. The work is divided into subcommittees: the survival committee and the outreach committee. The first deals with problems of relief to laid off workers while the second relates to organization, action, and the involvement of new people. The survival committee has been teaching classes in social services. The outreach committee has organized participation in demonstrations, and is working on building the Feb 5 demonstration in Washington. The Unemployed Committee as a whole has given help and advice to members in pressing for programs in their local unions.

The Committee's plans include launching a regular UAW unemployed newsletter called **Hard Times.** It is also thinking of holding low cost cabarets and other social functions designed to meet the budgets of laid off workers. We would like to hear from UAW members who would like to cooperate with us in organizing the unemployed.

The following press release that we put out on Jan 15 gives some idea of our programs and activities.

PRESS RELEASE

1. The United National Caucus (UNC) is a caucus of UAW members concerned with greater union militancy towards the corporations and the government, and a more democratic organization of the union.

2. The UNC Unemployed Committee is a city-wide organization of unemployed auto workers, organized to combat the effects and attack the causes of the current recession.

3. On Nov. 25, 1974, the UNC sent a delegation to Solidarity House to find out what the UAW planned to do about the catastrophic state of the auto industry, and the hardships being inflicted upon the union membership. We found that the UAW had no program to deal with the crisis. We were told that we would be informed as soon as the International Executive Board decided on a course of action; but we have heard nothing from them to date.

4. The UNC will send another delegation to Solidarity House at 4PM, Jan 15 to protest the lack of action on the part of the UAW so far, and to demand to know what the future plan is to deal with the current recession.

5. The only activity the International has proposed so far is a rally in Washington DC on Feb 5. The UNC regards this proposal as inadequate for the following reasons:

a. Not enough UAW members will be taken to Washington.

b. The rally is planned as a passive session of

speech making rather than a militant demonstration.

c. The UAW has put forward no program or set of demands as the theme of this rally. We suspect that they plan to rely on appealing to the same Democratic Party politicians that have always betrayed us in the past.

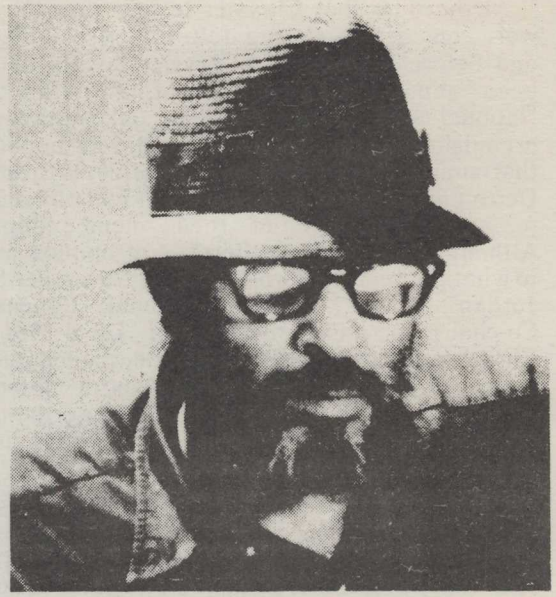
6. The UNC will do its utmost to build the Feb 5 meeting, but we see it not as a pep-rally, but the possible kickoff for a national unemployed workers movement.

7. The following is the UNC program for the Feb 5 rally:

A. Demands on the corporations: No layoffs—No plant closures—No runaway shops—Share the work—Short work week with no cut in pay—30 for 40—Guarantee the SUB fund from company assets—No overtime—No speedup—No cutback in health or safety standards—Open the books—Companies that cannot provide employment to be nationalized under workers' control.

B. Demands on the government: Full unemployment compensation (based on government figures for adequate living standards) for the duration of the layoffs—Jobs for all through public works, at union wages and union working conditions—Funds to come from the military budget and corporate profits—Cut workers' taxes.

C. Demands on the union: Call a special UAW convention, in Detroit, to mobilize the rank and file to deal with the crisis—Call a national Congress of Labor for Independent Political Action, build a Labor Party—Form open, democratic, unemployed committees in the locals. ☐



UNC Co-chairman Jordan Sims

[Mark Levitan is a member of Local 3 and in the Voice of Chrysler Workers Caucus, and chairman of the UNC Unemployed Committee.]

SUPPORT — JOIN — BUILD THE UNITED NATIONAL CAUCUS

☐ I would like to join the United National Caucus. Enclosed is $6 yearly membership dues.
☐ I would like more information about the United National Caucus.
☐ I would like a copy of "What is the United National Caucus?" One copy free. Multiple copies 10 for $1.

Name.....

Address.....City.....State.....Zip.....

Local.....Phone.....Union office (if any).....

Send to: The United National Caucus, PO Box 3821, Centerline, MI 48015.

The following letter was mailed out November 8 to all Chrysler Local Union Presidents in the Detroit area by Jordan Sims, President Local 961, Chrysler Eldon Ave Gear and Axle.

November 8, 1974

Dear Sir and Brother:

Massive layoffs and the threatened closing of Jefferson and other plants face our membership. The city of Flint, Michigan, for example, has already reached depression conditions due to GM layoffs last year. Detroit is likely to quickly get a lot worse in the very near future.

Because of the urgency of the situation, I am inviting you and all other Chrysler local union presidents of the greater Detroit area to a meeting at my local union hall, Friday, November 15, 1974. Time: 10:00am. Place: 7575 Lynch Road, Detroit, MI 48234. Our membership is looking to us for leadership in this crisis and we must not fail them. Chrysler Corporation has responsibility to its workers and the the community of Detroit that it should not be allowed to run out on.

Most Detroit area Chrysler workers feel their job security badly threatened. SUB funds will not hold up under the onslaught of massive layoffs, and this will create great hardship, frustration and anger among our membership. Moving Chrysler operations out of the city of Detroit (closing Jefferson may just be the beginning) will create resentment on the part of the entire community. Chrysler local presidents are in a unique position to give leadership to a program that can protect our membership and this community.

I have been given to understand that at a leadership meeting at Local 7, Jefferson Assembly, our International Vice-President Douglas Fraser, suggested a demonstration at Chrysler Highland Park headquarters to protest the threatened plant closing. I concur wholeheartedly with Brother Fraser's idea. There are many things we can do and should do to show our membership that we are concerned and will involve ourselves in a program for action. Time is short, and I urge you to attend this meeting.

The following are demands I believe we should be making on Chrysler Corporation in defense of our membership:

1. Keep Jefferson and all other Chrysler plants open with a full workforce.
2. Make emergency adjustments to the SUB program that will guarantee fill SUB payments to all laid off workers for the duration of all layoffs.
3. Set up a program of sharing the work by means of week on, week off, or shorter work week programs to the degree necessary to maintain a full work force with guaranteed full SUB protection.
4. Absolutely no overtime while workers are laid off.
5. I believe we should contact all politicians who receive CAP donations demanding from them legislative action to guarantee full employment, to prevent run-away shops, and to extend State Unemployment Compensation for the duration of all layoffs.

To back up these demands, I would urge discussion at the meeting of organizing the mass demonstration at Chrysler Highland Park Headquarters. I believe we should explore the feasibility of a 24 hour work holiday in the Detroit area in solidarity with laid off brothers and sisters and in support of this demonstration.

Further, I believe we should press for the convocation of an emergency special UAW Convention to discuss the crisis throughout the auto industry and to plan strategies for a coordinated response.

A press conference will be scheduled for November 14, 1974 at 10:00 am, your presence and participation would be welcome and appreciated.

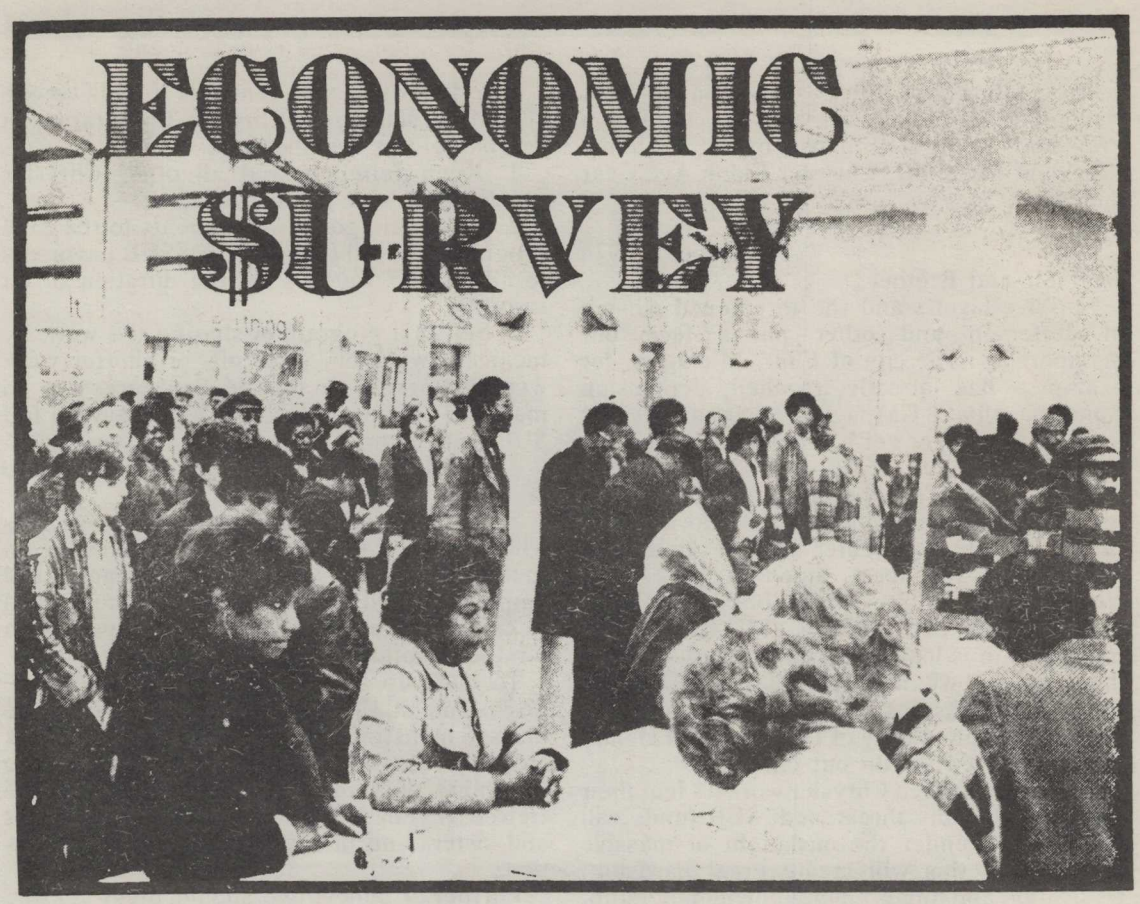
I hope you will be able to attend and participate in this very important program.

Fraternally,

Jordan U. Sims, President
Local 961 UAW

P.S. Invitations sent out to all greater Detroit area local Chrysler presidents and to Douglas Fraser, Director of the UAW Chrysler Department and to George Merrelli, Director of Region 1 UAW.

ECONOMIC SURVEY



The winter cold isn't the only thing making people shiver lately. Everyone's talking depression. 1974 was a rotten year for the economy and a disaster for auto workers. 1975 will be worse—in fact it will be the worst year since World War II put an end to the Great Depression.

WHERE WE'RE AT— ON THE DOWNHILL SLIDE

Unemployment nationally in early December was 7.1% according to government figures. This is 6½ million people and is the highest rate in 13 years. Another 3.4 million are working part-time "for economic reasons." So there are 10 million people who can't find full-time work, not including those who have given up looking or who just didn't get counted.

WHO GETS HIT THE HARDEST

The overall figures are just the beginning of the story. The unemployment rate for blue-collar workers is 9.4%, over **twice** the white-collar rate. And if you are black, female, or young, you're really in trouble:

chart

In those areas dependent on auto, things are even worse. This shows the rest of the country what lies ahead. In the tri-county Detroit area, unemployment in December was 12.4%. In Detroit's inner-city, it was 30% and still rising. This means 1 out of 8 people in the metropolitan area and 1 out of 3 in the inner city are out of work.

The government is now openly predicting the national rate will go to 8%, but 10% is a more realistic forecast. That may not be as bad as the 1930's, but it is sure as hell a depression.

THE RICH GET RICHER

Heard the one lately about wage increases causing inflation? Official government statistics show that this is not what is going on at all. They publish a figure that shows the comparison between the price of manufactured goods and the unit labor cost (cost of wages, benefits, etc going into the goods). They use the year 1967 (a good year for profits) as their standard of comparison. According to these figures, prices last July were 14% higher relative to labor costs than in 1967. The facts, however, don't stop business from complaining that wages are too high and profits too low. And these complaints will get louder.

COLLAPSE OF THE AUTO INDUSTRY

1974 car sales of 8.9 million were the lowest of any non-strike year since 1963. Compared to 1973, GM sales were down 27%, Ford 17% and Chrysler 21%. Whenever sales slip, the companies know what to do—reach for the pink slips:

Hourly Indefinite Layoffs

GM 92,000
Ford 32,650
Chrysler 39,400
Big 3 Total 164,050

Almost 25% of autoworkers are **indefinitely** laid off in January, while total layoffs in auto are about 370,000. Thats over 50%. Even the white collar workers in the industry are feeling the pinch, with layoffs hitting them too. Chrysler and AMC have cancelled COLA for their nonunion workers.

GOOD NEWS FOR STOCK HOLDERS

But not all the auto news is bad. Each of the Big 3 declared a dividend for their stockholders late in '74: GM—85c, Ford—80c, and Chrysler—35c per share. It may be that the dividends have something to do with car prices having gone up an average of $1,000 since the '73 models.

WHAT WILL BUSINESS DO?

The corporations have a simple answer to the depression: No wage increases if you want to keep working. Raise prices and profits. Speedup, speedup, speedup.

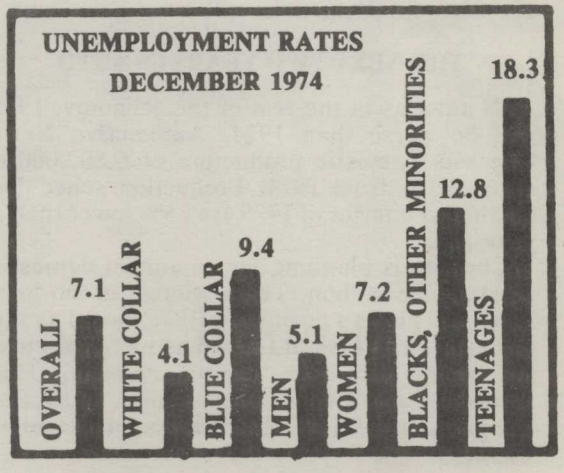
Real wages (take home pay adjusted for cost of living) in manufacturing have already fallen to the level they were at in 1965 and they will fall lower. Already bad, working conditions are under attack everywhere.

AND WHAT WILL GOVERNMENT DO?

But what about the government and those big Democratic majorities in Congress. There will be a small tax cut (12 billion for individuals, 4 billion for business), for one year only. This is about the same amount that inflation is raising taxes. Ford is also proposing to raise taxes on oil which will raise the price of gas and heating fuel about 15c a gallon. It will raise the cost to industry of power, transportation, and heating which will be passed on to the consumer in higher prices for goods for the average working family. This will more than eat up the tax cut savings.

Ford claims this oil tax increase will be handed right back as an extra tax rebate. But believe that when you see it. There will also be a token public works program which will probably go mainly to rehire the people who are being laid off by the big cities.

The real heart of the Democrat's program will be some sort of attempted controls. This has been tried before, here and in other countries. What it always boils down to is wage controls, with all the rest being public relations. Both Democrats and Republicans believe that to get out of the depression you have to give the corporations "adequate" profits and this means making workers pay.



PROTECTIONISM ISN'T THE ANSWER

Another solution put forward by Woodcock and others is to get rid of the imports-protectionism. This won't work either. The auto industry in the rest of the world is already hit hard. In Britain, Chrysler is laying off while the government has had to step in to rescue British Leyland. In France, Chrysler has called on the government to step in to prevent a "disaster." In Germany, Volkswagon is laying off and in Japan there are cutbacks too.

A recent survey of international corporate managers said that the "wage gap" between the US and Europe and Japan was "closing fast."

Trying to solve our problems at the expense of foreign autoworkers isn't going to work. In the long run, it weakens us by pitting worker against worker, a policy the automakers would like to encourage.

THE OUTLOOK FOR 1975

A lot of economic forecasters have been saying that the economy will turn around at mid-year, with inflation down to 6—7% and unemployment starting to go down from an 8% peak. Things actually are not going to be even that "good." Unemployment will continue to rise through the year, getting to about 10%. Inflation may fall a little, but the first signs of recovery will set off a new round of inflation with prices rising even faster than now. Government action will be enough to prevent this depression from becoming as bad as the '30s but those same actions will guarantee inflation. Long before employment picks up, the SUB funds in auto will have gone bust.

THE NEXT TWO YEARS IN AUTO

IN auto, as in the rest of the economy, 1975 will be worse than 1974. **Automotive News** forecasts domestic production of 6,802,000—down 8.1% from 1974. Production schedules for the 1st quarter of 1975 are 25% lower than a year ago.

Chrysler is planning for an annual domestic market of 6 million. This estimate is too low. Sales will pick up during the 1976 model as the economy recovers a little and as more cars just fall apart and have to be replaced. This recovery won't last very long. Layoffs, however, are still going to stay indefinite for a while.

What about those who manage to hang onto their jobs and get the benefits of 1973's "historic agreement." If inflation averages 9—10% between now and the expiration of the contract in September 1976, autoworkers' real spendable earnings (earnings corrected for federal income and social security taxes, and changes in the Consumer Price Index) will be about $2.50 a week **less** than in September 1973. Even this is too optimistic since food prices have been going up much faster than the overall CPI and autoworkers spend a bigger proportion of their income on food than the index assumes. Also we have not accounted for the increases in state and local taxes, which have been pretty steep. If all this is figured in, wages will probably be back to the 1970 level. Two contracts to get no wage increase and massive layoffs.

One big selling point for the last contract was the improved pension setup. But only 14% of the workers with 30 years have retired. The reason is that pensions are frozen until 1979 with no COLA, and you get that big $700 a month only if you wait until 1979 to retire. How much will $700 buy in 1979? Not much.

Nor is there any guarantee that pensions will go up after 1979 for those workers who have already retired by that date.

By the time negotiations have begun on the 1976 contract, the total inadequacy of the SUB program will be painfully clear for everyone to see. Whatever the SUB program was in fact designed to accomplish, its promise of providing workers with job security will not have been fulfilled.

THEY WANT TO MAKE THE WORKERS PAY

Things are pretty bad and they aren't going to get better very fast. Neither the corporations nor the Administration, nor the Democrats in Congress have the answers that workers need. Business and government will be working together to make sure that workers pay the costs of the crisis. Their policies will be billed as "fair" and "evenhanded" but the reality will be what we have described. Layoffs for many, wage controls for those still working and soaring prices for all. □

[Mike Buckley has a Masters degree in Economics and is the husband of a UAW Local 212 member.]

THE UNITED BLACK WORKERS

Formed in 1968 the United Black Workers has been involved in the struggle of all oppressed workers at the Mahwah Plant and Local 906. The statement below is taken from their General Principles.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

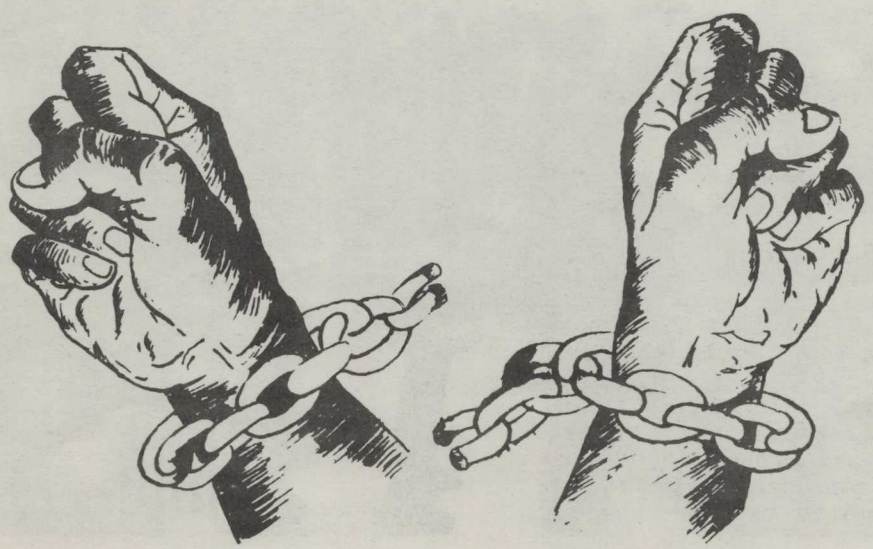
We here by state that as oppressed workers here at the Mahwah Plantation (Ford Plant) we are not bound by any constitution, contracts, agreements, known or unknown, by-laws or company policies agreed upon by management and the UAW that are racist or tend to depreive Black, Third World and all oppressed workers of their basic constituational and moral rights. These rights being human dignity, health and safety, better working conditions, and equal job opportunities.

We further state it is our right as workers to demand that both labor and management made use of large portions of the monies gained from our labors to improve the living, educational and health conditions in our communities with no strings attached.

To obtain these rights the U.B.W. are committed to organize, agitate, expose, inform and use all means at our disposal, not settling for anything short of victory.

We further state that we are not bound to respect, obey or follow the leadership of any plant manager, supervisor, union official or any other underlings who negate any claim they might have for these rights when they place personal ambition, self interest, profit and property rights over the human rights of workers.

The factories belong to the people and we workers are the people. □



STATE OF SUB

In Businessweek Magazine dated February 3, we found the following review of where SUB stood as of January 1, 1975:

•The General Motors fund reserves were down to $101.6-million, or 18.9% of maximum funding. Union sources say GM's fund is "in serious trouble—it can't last." At the present or contemplated level of layoffs, by midyear benefits will have to be cut 20% for senior workers and suspended entirely for many others.

•The American Motors fund was down to $4-million, or to 30%.

•Ford and Chrysler reserves were much more substantial—Ford with $154.7-million, or 61.5%, and Chrysler under $79-million, or 48%. But January layoffs are now raising worries that money available for SUB checks will be exhausted later this year.

The article ends with a quote from UAW Vice-President Irving Bluestone expressing the militant fighting attitude of our union leadership: **"If there is no money in the SUB fund, there is no way benefits can be paid. That will be it."**

WORKER LEAVING SHUT-DOWN AUTO PLANT

Network Special: An Autoworker's Strategy for Economic Survival

[An opinion article by Jack Weinberg for the Network Editorial Board]

The first reaction of most autoworkers to the present economic hard times was surprise and shock. At times like these, it is important that we remind ourselves that economic calamities like unemployment and runaway inflation are quite different from natural disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes. Economic calamities are the direct result of human actions, not natural forces. Workers are laid off, or prices rise, only as a result of policy decisions made, ordered and carried out by corporation executives. These people have as their first job to protect the profits of the corporation. Under economic pressure, they will make us and our families suffer to an extent limited only by what they believe we, the working people, the great majority, are willing to let them get away with. That limit will be determined by the degree to which we are organized, by the programs we devise, and by our willingness and determination to take united action to enforce our programs.

The following is a three part article laying out an autoworker's strategy for economic survival. This article takes as its starting point the clear fact that the people who now run the UAW are neither willing or able to effectively lead autoworkers in defending ourselves and our families from economic misery caused by a growing attack on our living standards. To do the job that is needed, a new leadership will have to emerge as part of the development of a new, militant, dynamic movement of the rank and file.

The first part of the article is entitled: "UAW Response to the Economic Crisis." It outlines reactions in our union, both in the leadership and in the rank and file, to the present economic situation of massive layoffs. The second part is called: "A Program for the Ranks." It lays out the kind of program our union should be fighting for based on the concept that a union should fight to put the needs of working people ahead of the desires of corporations to protect their profits. The third part is called: "Organizing a Movement." It lays out a plan of action for rank and file militants who believe that something must be done, and who are willing to devote the time and energy to do it.

1. UAW Response To The Economic Crisis

As autoworkers, the first responsibility for our economic defense lies with our union, the UAW. Our membership has been the victim of a growing and deepening crisis for the past year that promises to continue and get worse. The Washington March stands out in sharp contrast to the almost total lack of leadership action or membership involvement over the past year. At the 1973 Constitutional Convention, the United National Caucus attempted to put a resolution on the floor calling attention to the fact that SUB would soon be in trouble and urging emergency action. The only reaction of the union leadership was to keep the resolution off the floor, to deny any problem, and write glowing articles about SUB in the pages of "Solidarity."

Since then we have heard from UAW Vice President Irving Bluestone that the UAW should propose to the corporations that workers take a wage cut in the form of giving up part of our Cost of Living Allowance. He said that the extra money could be put into the SUB and that the time has come for workers to sacrifice. Simple arithmetic proves that the money would be only a drop in the bucket toward bailing out SUB. But this plan would be taken as a sign by the companies that the union is prepared to retreat, not only in the fight to protect jobs, but in the fight to protect wages as well.

We have all heard Doug Fraser, another UAW Vice President, propose to Chrysler that they speed up Jefferson Assembly Plant with union approval in order to keep it open. He seems to want a speedup competition between assembly plants under threat that the loser gets shut down. Not much of a way to save jobs. We also heard Fraser charge Chrysler officials with mismanagement (not robbery) when they used December lay-offs to rip-off their negotiated obligations to provide holiday pay. This rip-off saved the corporation a total of $18 million.

The best our UAW President Leonard Woodcock seems to be able to do is join hands with the companies in calling on Congress to relax emission and safety standards, and in leading the UAW into the automobile advertising business. Our entire union leadership seems more than ready to watch the SUB program go down the drain. The GM fund is already in trouble, and Chrysler should be following very soon. Our leaders now try to tell us that SUB was never intended to deal with situations like this. If that is the case, then both the UAW leadership and the companies stand guilty of fraud.

For many years, autoworkers have been intentionally led to believe that SUB provides us with job security. In business publications, auto executives explained the value of the SUB program to the company. By making auto workers feel secure, the explain that this program has been an important factor in lowering job turnover and increasing worker productivity and committment to the corporation. They got out of it what they wanted, and now they want us to just passively accept that

this was a false sense of security and that we have no right to complain. In the next few months, massive numbers of UAW members will stop receiving SUB checks that we have been led to believe we were entitled to. Instead of our union leadership organizing massive protests against this fraud, they are defending the companies' right to cheat us out of our SUB protection.

ON TO WASHINGTON

The one positive proposal that UAW leadership has come up with so far is the Feb. 5 mobilization in Washington. At the time of this writing, the official demonstration program and demands have not been announced yet. Those of us associated with **Network** enthusiastically welcome this demonstration call and are doing all we can to help organize and build for it. We assume that the majority of the demonstration demands will point in a good direction even though we expect them to represent only timid half-steps in that direction. More important, thousands of unemployed autoworkers going to Washington will politically represent a demand for jobs—whatever the leaders say in their speeches. It will be a good example to other unions and other working people and will whet the appetite of UAW members for more.

The UAW leadership has called this demonstration, not because they are beginning to reform themselves, but because they feel under strong pressure from the ranks to act. For the past 25 years, the political machine, organized by the late Walter Reuther, and now controlled by Leonard Woodcock has reigned in the UAW without an effective challenge. Not only has this machine been able to dictate International Union policy, but it has also been able to dominate and control practically every single local union in the UAW. It is the opinion of **Network**, that under the impact of the present economic crisis, this machine, over the next few years, will start to break up.

The UAW membership is taking a bad beating. During booming economic times like much of the 1950's and 60's, it wasn't hard for the union leadership to keep themselves looking pretty good, even while they were playing ball with the companies. But those times are over. Woodcock and Co. know that if they just sit back and watch the membership take a beating, they will be setting themselves

up to get voted out of their jobs. These people have lost all ability to fight. (Many of the younger "yes" men were never fighters in the first place.) Deep down, they have become so soft on management that the very idea of leading the membership in serious battle with an effective program scares them to death.

As economic conditions keep on getting worse, and as the top leadership starts to get wise to what's going on, we can expect more militant talk, and more activities like the Washington March. While they are too little and too late, they point in the right direction. But we can also expect that dissatisfaction and pressure from the ranks will grow even quicker than the half-step measures the bureaucrats will take to try to get the pressure off of them.

Inside the top leadership, this leads to growing internal conflict. There will be disagreements over how to get the pressure off, and different bureaucrats will try to get the heat off themselves by blaming other bureaucrats for the problems. Under this growing pressure, two wings are emerging inside the top UAW bureaucracy. Today, the names most associated with these two wings are Pat Greathouse and Doug Fraser. It would be a mistake to make too much out of how things line up at any particular point in time, because no fundamental differences of principle seem to be involved and line-ups could shift rapidly.

Fraser is more associated with the liberal elements in the Democratic Party, and seems to have greatest support among that section of the bureaucracy most dependent on big city production workers. The program he would put forward is a return to "Reutherism." His base is most heavily affected by the layoffs, and he will be under the greatest pressure to start making militant sounds.

Greathouse is in charge of the agricultural implement section of the union which has hardly been affected by the layoffs at all. With his membership in less trouble, he will be under less pressure to start talking militant, but will also be in less situations that make him start appearing incompetent. He is associated with a more conservative policy inside the Democratic Party, and his greatest base of support is among the small town and rural section of the union membership. The policy he would put forward would be more in the direction of mainstream AFL-CIO.

It seems likely that militant talk on the part of sections of the union leadership will focus much more on questions of politics than on questions of union/management relations. It doesn't cost anything to denounce Gerald Ford

From the American Management Association 46th Annual Personnel Conference—

"Session:
'LABOR ¶ MANAGEMENT DETENTE—
working together for a better future.'

—Douglas A. Fraser, Vice-President UAW*
Detroit, Mich.

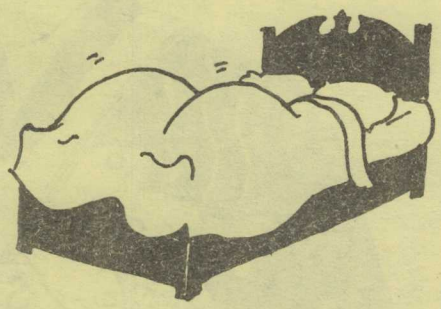
Recognizing and responding to the challenge of the '70s is the urgent business of both labor and management. Hear UAW Vice-President Douglas A. Fraser discuss how to build rapprochement, capitalize on issues of mutual self-interest and foster a general spirit of co-operation, not confrontation."

Tickets for the sessions are $80 per day.

• • • • • • •

Hell, Chrysler was paying me $5.95/hour to find out Doug won't fight.

'It's All in the Family'



in militant rhetoric. With elections over a year away, some UAW leaders are starting to talk militant in addressing demands on the Democratic Party as well: "We put them into office. They have a strong majority. They better deliver or else!" Unfortunately, this militant rhetoric is little more than a show, and no real follow-up can be expected. When election time comes, the UAW leaders are all 100% for the Democrats, no matter what. And everybody knows it.

Still, militant talk on the part of sections of the leadership is positive, even if they have no intention of following through in action. It starts the membership thinking, and creates an atmosphere in which the proposals put forwards by genuine militants get a more serious hearing. Even if the leaders have no intention of acting effectively on the basis of their militant rhetoric, they may influence the rank and file towards taking action that goes far beyond what the leadership wants to happen.

All of the leadership can be expected to be much more cautious on questions of union/management relations. None of them believe that a serious fight against the companies is possible. As a result, they feel at the mercy of the good will of the corporate giants. They are afraid to do things that get the companies too angry. They want to beg the companies not to chop the workers too bad. They know that their begging power goes way down if they start bad-mouthing the companies too much. These days, to tell the truth about how the company is treating the workers is to bad-mouth the company. That is why the UAW leadership refrains from exposing to the membership the kinds of thieves and scoundrals that GM, Ford, and Chrysler really are.

The greater the fight in the bureaucracy, the more militant rhetoric we will hear. As the splits and fights start to become more pronounced, many sincere rank and file oriented union members and activists are likely to begin looking to one side or another for salvation. **Network** believes that this would be a mistake. We believe that neither side will even begin to come out for the kinds of programs that are really needed to defend the membership and all working people. The leadership on both sides has a long record of joining with the companies to help break up any kind of rank and file organization or activity that has ever started giving any of the companies trouble. We view the growing struggle in the top leadership as little more than a falling out among the thieves over who is going to get the spoils.

The same economic pressure that tends to cause splits and confusion in the leadership will also lay the basis for the development of a new movement of union activism and militancy in the ranks. The main base of such a movement will be younger workers with 1965, or less, seniority. These are the workers who never experienced "reutherism" in the years when it had the appearance of being a pregressive force. Much of the earlyleadership for this movement will come from Vietnam Vets and from workers who had been influenced by the anti-war and black liberation activities of the 1960's. Growing hardship and insecurity will convince more and more workers that organizing to fight back to defend ourselves is becoming a matter of survival. Those workers who have been influenced by the movements of the '60's (there are thousands in auto) will often be the first to see the wider picture and to respond politically.

BUILD THE UNC

The United National Caucus, which has been shaped by the best of the last generation of UAW militants of the '40's and '50's, seems destined to play the role of starting to bring together and orient the newly emerging first wave of this generation. If it can actually succeed in playing this role, it will have performed a great service. Years of defeat have smuggled a certain element of conservatism and over-caution into the views of some of the older members of the United National Caucus. But even the most conservative varitation of the United National Caucus program represents a starting point that is an excellent foundation on which to build.

On its own, and without benefit of the experience of earlier UAW militants, it would take years and years of groping and false starts for a new movement to reach the level the UNC represents as a starting point. It is for this reasion that **Network** supports the United National Caucus totally and pledges all our effort in helping to build it. By being a caucus that is clearly independent of, and in opposition to, all wings of the UAW bureaucracy, the UNC helps teach younger militants the necessity of remaining opposed to all wings of the bureaucracy. □

CLOSED
UNTIL FURTHER
NOTICE

2. A Program For The Ranks

For at least the next year, unemployment will remain the number one issue inside the UAW. The leadership has proven that it is unwilling to even try to make a real fight over things like plant closures, layoffs, and protecting SUB. It refuses to demand loud and clear that the companies must be forced to live up to their social responsibilities. It refuses to forcefully denounce the philosophy on which the companies operate: profits come before people. Basically, it is the view of the union leadership that the companies are acting fully within their rights. They consider the hardships this causes the union membership to be unfortunate. But they reject the view that we must organize to force the companies to change the policies that create these hardships.

Workers actually faced with the threat of suffering the effects of unemployment will much more easily come to understand that organizing to force the companies to change their policies is becoming a matter of necessity. Everybody won't reach that conclusion at the same time. But as things get worse, radical proposals will start sounding more and more reasonable. **Network** believes that now is the time to press for the UAW to adopt a program that actually deals with the problems we are facing. The UAW should announce that it will fight with all means at its disposal for a policy of **no plant closures and no layoffs.** It should then be the position of the unions that when companies want to cut back their production, **they should let all the workers share the work by declaring a shorter work week at full pay.**

As an immediate step, the union should begin a fight to **guarantee the SUB.** Under emergency conditions like this, the union should demand that the companies have no right to let the SUB program go broke. SUB was a promise made to the workers. The union should take the stand that **SUB should be financed, if necessary, by the general assets of the corporations.** In fact, under present conditions, the union should be demanding emergency extensions of SUB just like there are emergency extensions of Unemployment Compensation. The UAW should come out for **full SUB for all workers for the duration of all layoffs,** as the social responsibility of the corporations.

There are provisions in our contract on which this fight can be based. Starting with the 1973 agreement, Big Three corporations reimburse the SUB fund with money from the general treasury for all short work week payments resulting from scheduled short work weeks. Short work week payments, therefore, do not drain money out of the SUB fund. Nor do they cost the workers credit units. Particularly at times like this, with SUB in trouble, the union should respond to layoffs with the demand of **share the work among everybody with short work weeks.**

Under this program, each worker with one year or more seniority would get 80% pay for each hour not worked; each worker would accumulate credit units rather than lose them; and the amount of money in the SUB fund

LAST HIRED,

Discrimination on account of race, nationality, and sex have always been practiced by the giant auto companies. Entry into the skilled trades is still, with only a few token exceptions, limited primarily to white male workers. Until the early 1960s, it was wide spread policy in the auto industry to severely limit the availability of job opportunities for black and other minority group workers even in production jobs. In some plants, particularly General Motors, large scale racial and national hiring exclusion in production is still going on.

Strict discrimination in hiring according to sex was the general rule in the auto industry until 1972. In the past few years, large numbers of women have been hired into the industry for the first time since World War II. Changing public opinion and a resulting change in government policy made it impossible for the auto giants to continue their discrimination in as open and blatant form as before. Race and sex discrimination, to be sure, have continued to be widespread in regard to job assignments, treatment, and discipline. But, at least when it came to the opportunity to get a production job, there definitely has been progress over the past few years.

PROGRESS REVERSED

The present situation of massive unemployment and layoffs now threaten to reverse this progress. Practically all the women workers in the industry have been laid off. In those plants where break-throughs in the hiring of blacks and other national minorities have been recent, the layoffs are hitting the minority workers the hardest. In the past few years, many auto plants got Federal money for programs that were supposed to help retrain the so called "hardcore" unemployed: primarily women and minority workers. In fact, this was just Federal money being used to help the companies. Those workers who were hired as part of the conditions for receiving this Federal money, have all been laid off.

The fight against layoffs has special meaning to workers who belong to groups that have historically faced discrimination in hiring. The recent progress for women workers could be reversed during this depression. Many stand to lose their seniority. When hiring starts up, the companies may try to use the tight job market as an excuse to return to their old policies. If they succeed, the gains women workers were thought to have won will have been eliminated.

Black and minority workers in general are being hit especially hard by this depression. The tendency of companies to close their oldest city plants and shift operations to suburban and rural settings will effect black workers most. Chrysler's plans to shut Jefferson Assembly is only the first of many moves in this direction that this depression will trigger.

Women and minority group workers have an added incentive to fight against layoffs and plant closures. For these workers, the fight to make the companies keep all workers on the job at full wages is doubly important.

COMPENSATORY TREATMENT

The main struggle is for jobs for everybody. But women workers and minority skilled tradesmen should have the right to make special claims for special treatment by the companies. In some plants, this applies to black and minority workers in production as well. This is the case when they can rightfully assert that as a result of past discrimination in hiring, they, as a group, are being eliminated from the plants. If the companies are permitted to do this, they will be reestablishing the racial and sexual imbalances that they were only recently forced to correct.

Such claims are based on what is called the **right to compensatory treatment.** When the effects of past discriminatory policies continue having an effect on workers, this gives those workers the right to special treatment to help

FIRST FIRED?

overcome these effects of past discrimination. It should be the policy of the UAW and all militant UAW members to encourage and support women and minority group workers in making these claims.

COMPANIES MUST PAY

Unfortunately, the UAW leadership has taken the wrong side on this question. Through their narrow vision, they view such claims as an attack on the seniority system, and thus on the union itself. But there is no reason to view the claims this way. By the insistence of the companies, every UAW contract contains a management's rights clause. This clearly establishes that hiring policies are solely the responsibility of the corporation. Therefore, the responsibility for hiring discrimination is also solely the responsibility of the corporation. If the company alone is responsible for the discrimination, then the company alone must be forced to pay the total cost of compensatory treatment to overcome the effects of their past discriminatory policy.

When women and minority group workers justly demand compensatory treatment, the companies, and sometimes judges who are friendly to the company, try to say that the only way this can be accomplished is by laying off higher seniority workers, that is by attacks on the seniority system. Let's face it, our enemies will always use every trick in the book to attack and weaken the union. They try to say that the only possible compensation is to keep women or minority workers on the job doing work that causes higher seniority workers to be laid off. They want a situation where one worker, with a legitimate claim to compensatory treatment is pitted against another worker with a legitimate claim to job protection by seniority. The workers fight for the jobs; the companies look on with glee. This is wrong!

If a GM executive got caught robbing a bank, no judge could get away with garnisheeing pay of GM production workers to reimburse the bank for its money. If GM has been guilty of a past policy of discrimination in hiring, then it is GM that must be forced to pay the penalty, not the workers who have no responsibility for the past injustice on which today's legitimate compensatory claims are based.

UNION SHOULD LEAD

Together with the fight to protect everybody's jobs, the UAW should take the initiative in the fight for compensatory treatment, but in a different way. Where, as a result of past discriminatory hiring policies, women or minority group workers face a layoff situation that substantially eliminates them from the work force, or sharply reduces their proportion, it should be the union that raises the demand for compensatory treatment. The key to compensatory treatment is that the workers involved should maintain their wages and should not lose their accumulated seniority. The union must insist that the companies provide compensation in a way that does not violate the contract. **The companies must be prohibited from using the compensated workers to do work that would displace a higher seniority worker and result in that worker being laid off.** Payment for compensation must come out of the pocket of the corporation, not out of the pocket of another worker.

would go up rather than down. Workers with less than a year seniority would continue gaining seniority, and upon reaching one year, would become eligible for SUB.

Network does not believe that the SUB program, as presently defined by our union contract, is good enough. But even under the terms of the existing agreement, short work weeks place the overwhelming cost of the economic situation on the shoulders of the corporation rather than permitting this burden to crush the worker. **Share the work with short work weeks** should become a fighting slogan of the UAW to deal with the present situation.

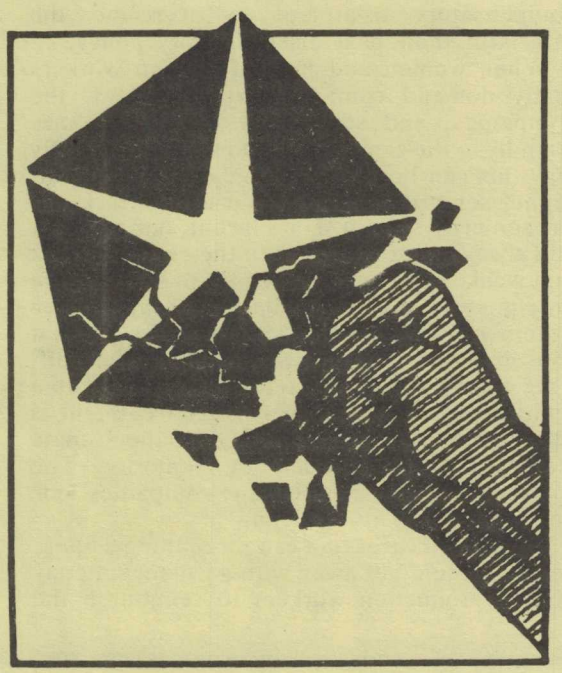
MAKE THE UNION ACT

When large numbers of workers are on the streets, the companies use this opportunity to intimidate, harass ad speed workers up. They try to take advantage of fear in the shops to get rid of "troublemakers" and to squeeze out more production, so they can save money and lay more people off. The union must have a **vigorous policy of resisting all forms of harassment and speedup.** Even more blatant is the company policy of scheduling overtime while there are people laid off. The UAW should publicly denounce this as an anti-social act by the corporations. The union should be organizing and fighting for **no overtime while there are workers laid off.**

The UAW rank and file should also be demanding effective political action from our union. Every working person should be guaranteed the right to a job, by law. If jobs are unavailable, **federal law should require Unemployment Compensation to provide a standard of living equivalent to union wages, and benefits should last for the duration of unemployment.** But there is no reason that workers should have to lay around the house without jobs while there is useful work that needs to be done. The UAW should be demanding a **Federal Jobs program to provide jobs for any unemployed workers and union wages and under union working conditions.** This country has need for homes, schools, hospitals, parks.

The UAW should also be demanding legislation that forces the giant corporations to live up to their social responsibilities. **Plant closures and layoffs should be prohibited by law.** Companies should be required to give every worker a full paycheck every week. **Overtime while there are layoffs should be outlawed.**

There are no elected officials in Washington



today that are ready to get behind this kind of program. To do so would invite a declaration of war from all of big business. Such a program would threaten the owners of all newspapers, of all TV stations, liberal as well as conservative. Big money would contribute hundreds of millions of dollars to a campaign to defeat candidates with these views. They would hire public relations firms to do a smear job. They would put their hired brains to work proving that such programs could never work. Big business would spare no effort to defeat any program that would force them to put the needs of their workers before the needs of their pocketbooks.

Our union should spare no effort to advance programs that put working people first. So long as the UAW continues tying its political future to the Democratic Party, this will never happen. The Democrats have a strong majority in Washington and in most state capitals. In the months ahead, they will be put to the test, and will be found lacking. The Democrats have no program to put us back to work. This is because the Democratic Party is basically a liberal business party, with labor support.

BUILD A LABOR PARTY

Working people need their own party, a labor party. We need a party with a program that puts the interests of working people first, and does so without embarassment or compromise. A labor party with a strong imaginative program supported by the major unions could quickly win the support of the American people, the majority of whom are workers. As the economic situations gets worse, this will become more and more true. The most effective political act the UAW could take would be to **invite all unions, all civil rights organizations, all women's organizations, all progressive community organizations to a Congress of Labor. The purpose of this Congress would be to unite these forces into a labor party that could truly represent working people in the political arena. this would be labor's declaration of war.**

During the last depression, the working people were reduced to unbearable misery and poverty. But even though GM workers took a terrible beating, GM brags to this day that they declared a stock dividend every single year throughout the 1930s. When companies cry poverty in respond to demands by workers for jobs, we should not take their word. The union should be demanding the companies **open their books** and reveal their true financial picture. You can be sure of many surprises.

As the economic crisis gets worse, there will be companies that start getting into economic trouble. They will refuse to carry out their social responsibilities to their workers and even try to convince workers to take wage cuts. If the trouble gets bad enough, they will ask the government to step in and bail out the stockholders with money collected from our tax dollars. The UAW has already come out advocating that the big oil companies be nationalized. We believe it is necessary to take the position that **any company that can't live up to its social responsibilities to its workers should be taken over by the government and run by the workers themselves.**

3. Oganizing A Movemement

A program, so long as it remains only words on a piece of paper, doesn't mean very much. The existing leadership of the UAW won't fight for the kind of program that has been described. Nor does there exist yet, the kind of rank and file forces inside the union that are strong enough to turn things around. But there are a small and growing group of rank and file activists who want to get started.

The struggle begins on the local union level. Most UAW local leadership groups are totally controlled by the International. Efforts should still be made to involve rank and file members of the local union in an effort to see just how far the local can be pressed. Anything positive accomplished by members of one local gives encouragement to members of other locals and can be pointed to as positive examples that can be followed. Special emphasis should be put on activities that actually begin involving rank and file members. The best starting point is to press for a special local union unemployed committee that is open to all members of the local union and is empowered to make its own decisions and to elect its own officers. Such committees are needed to carry out three jobs:

1) Keep the local union membership fully informed about all rights they have and all services available to them; 2) Organize efforts to establish moratoriums on debt payments during layoffs and aid laid off members in resisting threats of repossesion, foreclosure, eviction, or utility shut-offs; 3) Organize to press the whole union to take more effective action around a program to resist layoffs, and join together with union, community, political and other types of organizations to campaign for a program of jobs for all, full wages for all.

In most cases, local union officials will resist the establishment of the kinds of committees described above. But under enough pressure, they are likely to set up some kind of program. Usually it is best to cooperate fully with any program even if it goes only a small part of the way in the right direction. However hostile your local union officers may be to you (they are usually hostile to good union militants) every effort should be made to get them to permit you to get personally involved in the official local union programs. You should also try to get as many other workers as possible involved. Creative efforts should be made to improve these programs by positive action and example.

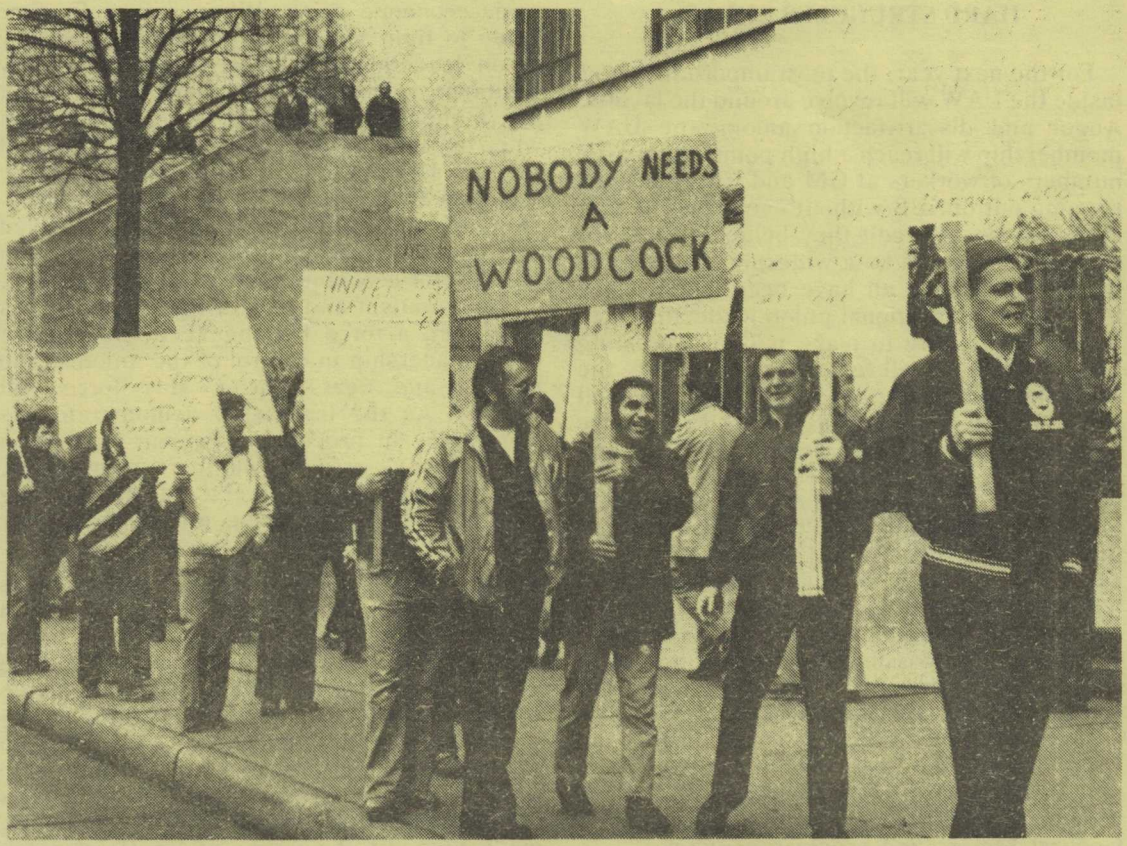
FORM A CAUCUS

Through these means, it is possible to find out just how far the local union can be moved. Usually the local union leadership will try to stop things far short of what is necessary. If they don't, that is great. The local union can then become a base to help carry the struggle forward throughout the rest of the UAW. It can adopt the kind of program described earlier based on the principle that the needs of working people come first. It can publicize the program to its own membership and throughout the union. It can educate and train its

membership to take actions. Winning a local union is a step towards winning the entire union.

In most instances, this won't work. The local leadership are usually loyal supporters of the policies of the International and will not permit the local to project programs that challenge or even question the policies of the International. Inevitably this will lead to a controversy inside the local. A caucus in the local union is needed, to organize against the roadblocks to effective action the local leaders put down. Such caucuses find themselves in opposition, not only to local union policy, but to International union policy. However small and weak to begin with, we believe it is most effective for such a caucus to put itself forward as a group with a program around which it wishes to construct a new leadership, not only for the local, but for the entire International union as well. To give reality to this claim, we encourage such local caucuses to affiliate with the United National Caucus, the only real national opposition caucus inside the UAW.

A word of caution. Many local unions have a leadership divided into two warring factions, neither of them any good. The prospect of carrying out a fight against unemployment through an established local faction that is out of office, is often attractive. But the out-of-office group may only want to criticize the incumbents. If they are hesitant to come out for a fight to change the basic policy and program, not just of the local union, but of the International as well, chances are there is something to worry about. Time and again, sincere militants have helped to dump one local leadership only to help put into office another group that isn't really very different. The internal politics of every single local union are unique. There are no sure formulas about how to proceed. But, it is always a safe bet to



United National Caucus members demonstrating in Detroit against Woodcock regime.

emphasize questions of program, activity, membership involvement, and attitude toward the bankrupt policies of the International union leadership.

It is always a good idea for local caucuses to put out regualar literature to keep the membership informed and aware. Where local caucuses are strong enough, they should sponsor the kinds of programs and activities that they can't get the local union to do officially—be it giving out information, organizing demonstrations, or joining coalitions on unemployment with community groups. You show your leadership more by what you do than what you say. Local union caucuses, based on a program to meet the real needs of workers, and commited to action, will be the basis on which a new movement throughout the UAW will be built up that can truly challenge the policies of today's top leadership.

HARD STRUGGLES AHEAD

For the next year, the most important issues inside the UAW will revolve around the layoffs. Anger and dissatisfaction among the UAW membership will reach a high point when large numbers of workers at GM and Chrysler start running out of SUB without even coming near the 52 weeks of credit they believed they had coming. There will be a widespread feeling in the ranks that we all have been victims of a fraud. The International union leadership may be under pressure to make militant sounding noises, but they will feel obliged to justify the right of the companies to cut off SUB, and will refuse to make any serious efforts to organize the ranks for a fight to defend our jobs and income.

The reaction of most laid off workers is likely to be demoralization. The hassle of making it through hard times with little money can be exhausting. Only a very small proportion of laid off workers will see any value in remaining active in union affairs. Only a few will have the vision that it is possible for working people to organize their strength and take on giants like General Motors. But it is these small numbers around whom a new movement inside the UAW can be built in the 1970s just like it was only small numbers of autoworkers in the 1930s who believed it was possible to stand up to General Motors and organize a union.

At the point were the SUB crunch comes, it is critical that there be a voice inside the UAW that is clearly and boldly speaking out and telling it like it is: "If the company gets away with ripping us off, **it's not because they have a right to,** but because we are too poorly organized and weak while they are strong. The purpose of the union should be to strengthen the workers and fight for our jobs and wages, not to justify the company."

This will make sense to a lot of workers. It will make sense to even larger numbers of workers who are themselves still demoralized and not yet ready to act. Demands for full employment through short work weeks and backing up the SUB with corporate funds is exactly what the union should be fighting for. It should be leaving no stone unturned on the economic or political front to accomplish this program.

In past years however bad the reputation of the UAW leadership, few workers really questioned their ability to defend the union's basic economic gains. When proposals were made to fight for a new union policy or new union leadership, the response was usually hesitance, reluctance, often fear. And it wasn't just a question of the fear of reprisals. Even when opposition voices said things that seemed to make a lot of sense, workers were generally reluctant to gamble on an unknown quantity. However dissatisfied, workers still believed that this leadership gave them a certain measure of economic security and protection.

Conservatism and fear of the unknown has long been a force helping keep the present UAW leadership in control of the union.In the months and years ahead, this force will weaken. As the leadership demonstrates its bankruptcy in providing economic protection and security, growing numbers of workers, particularly younger workers, will start looking around for, and considering, alternatives. They will see it as a matter of survival.

If the SUB crunch comes before May, this question may take on a particular meaning in those locals that have general elections this year. Local officers often get voted out of office as a membership reaction to anger with the policies of the International leadership. Usually this is a futile act. Usually, a new leadership gets elected that is just as committed to supporting the International and its policies as the ones they replaced. Every effort should be made to inject the issues of layoffs and job security into the May union elections.

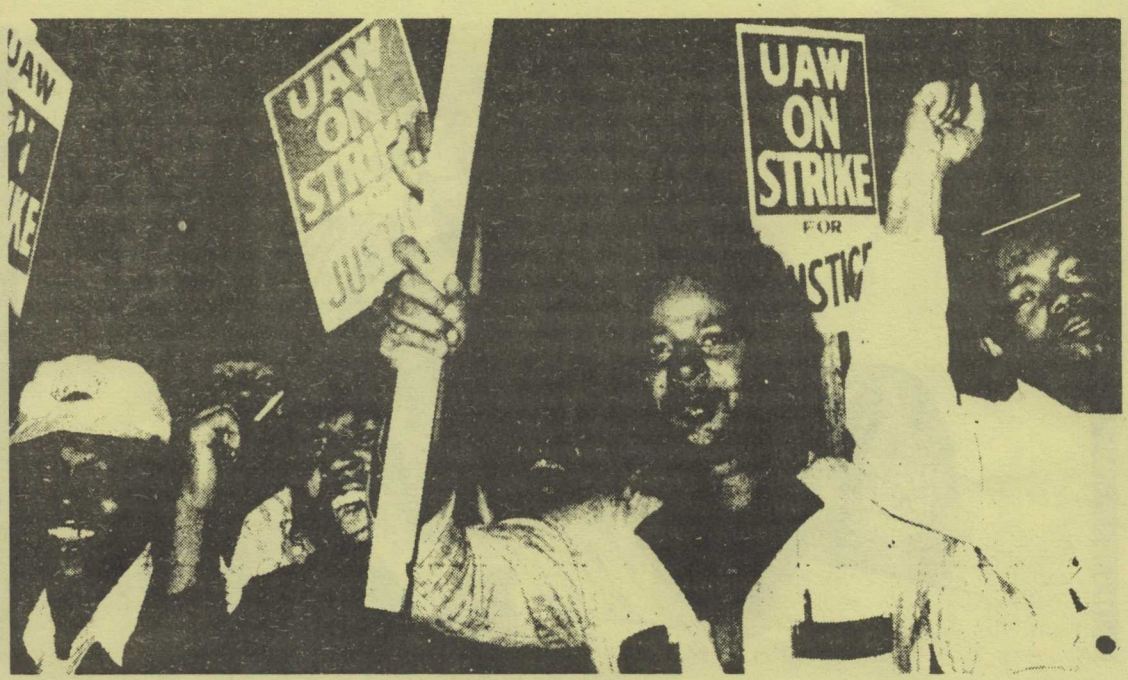
Candidates for office should be required to take a stand on the fight for jobs—do they support the approach of the present International leadership on the question?—or are they willing to campaign inside the UAW for a change in policy? In other words, every effort should be made to force candidates for union office to either take responsibility for the do-nothing policies of the International leadership, or if not, to pledge themselves to fight against that policy.

PLAN AHEAD

Local efforts to organize committees of the unemployed in local unions and to press for a militant fighting program for jobs should be tied together on a national basis as much as possible. The United National Caucus is the best vehicle for this. How successful this will be will depend on how will the work goes forward on the local union level. A nationally coordinated campaign in the UAW—literature, coordinated efforts at local union meetings, demonstrations, etc. will only have an impact when it is based in strong local groups. This is the immediate task. Communication and sharing experiences is a must. Network can play a role in this. So can the United National Caucus, particularly if they go forward with their plans to launch a UAW oriented unemployed newsletter.

It is hard to predict how far forward the struggle will get before we reach an economic upturn. By spring 1976 at the very latest, we expect a fairly substantial recovery in auto. At that point, the main issue in the UAW will shift somewhat. Unemployment protection will still be very important, because the recovery can only be expected to be short lived. But the questions of protection from inflation—both in regard to wages and to pensions—will take on added meaning as new inflationary records are set. Working conditions and speedup will also become increasingly important as the companies try to take advantage of worker insecurity to cut labor costs by pressing for greater and greater productivity. More and more, the eyes of the workers will be turning toward the 1976 negotiations and contract.

Building a movement to fight unemployment is much more difficult than building a movement inside the UAW to fight for a decent contract. Whatever forces have been built up through unemployed work and the fight for jobs, can easily be shifted to a campaign over the contract. The demands of the ranks should



be obvious: **renegotiate the SUB** so that it gives us full job protection backed up by full corporate assets; **give us back the money we lost to inflation** and the right to a pension that is protected from inflation; **give us the tools to protect ourselves from the inhuman speedup and harassment.**

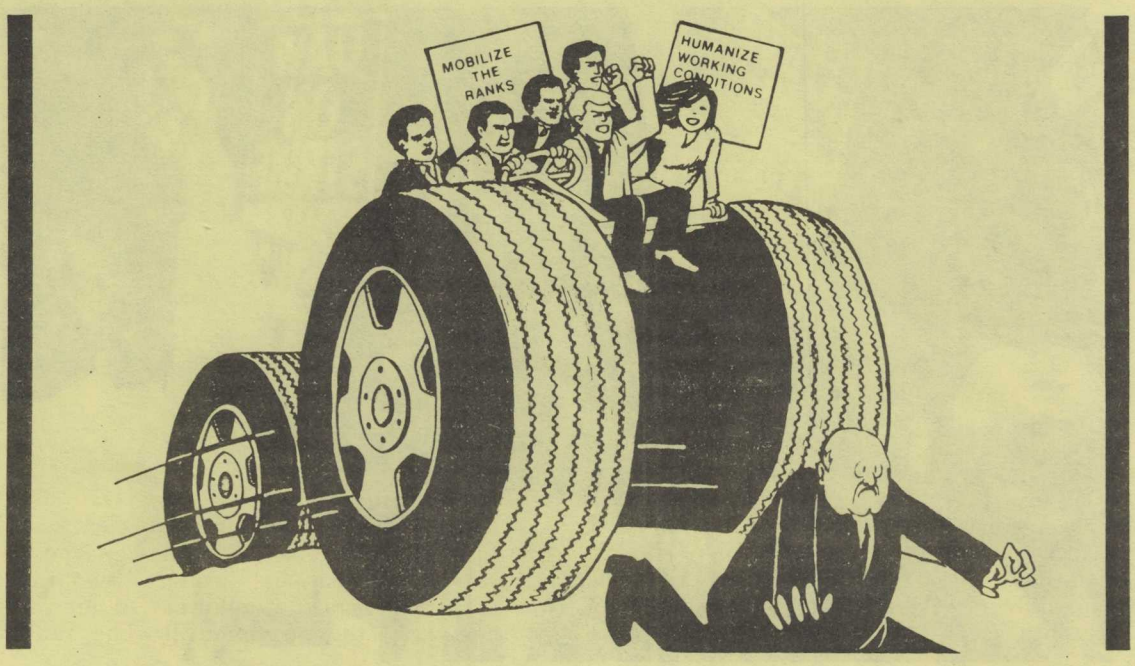
The companies will cry poverty. The International leadership will talk tough, but refuse to lead a fight for what we really need. Only organization in the ranks can make the difference in 1976 between victory and bad defeat. The question will not only be contract demands, but strategy as well. Auto workers will only get in 1976 what we are willing and determined to fight for. The struggle today over unemployed committees and unemployment programs will lead directly into the 1976 struggle over the contract.

After the contract, all eyes will turn to the 1977 UAW Constituational Convention. By then, the present top leadership will probably be fighting it out in a struggle over who will replace Woodcock as the next UAW president. A movement built up in the struggles against unemployment and over the 1976 contract may be able to turn that convention around. If enough rank and file delegates are present we can fight for a convention that takes up the real problems of UAW members, rather than one that is just a battle by bureaucrats for jobs.

As soon as the 1976 contract fight is over, hopefully the ground will have been laid for a nationally coordinated opposition campaign for convention delegates committed to a program of changing the policy and leadership of the UAW to make it better able to defend both its members and all working people.

For the first time in a generation, we should be able, on a large scale, to run issue oriented campaigns inside the UAW around the life and death issues that we face. It would be overly optimistic to believe that a rank and file movement would be strong enough by 1977 to be more than a minority at the convention. But if we can build a movement that is strong enough to make a showing at that convention, we will have achieved a great deal.

It will be on the basis of these activities that a strong, well-organized, militant rank and file movement can be built up throughout the UAW. Such a movement, even as an organized minority, can begin the job of transforming our union from an instrument of cooperation with the bosses into an instrument of struggle. In the years to come, only fighting unions and a fighting labor movement can save American workers from economic disaster. □



The Linden Auto Workers' Caucus: Linden On The Move

Not long before the 10-week strike of General Motors in 1970, an incident occurred at the Linden GMAD plant which was to alter, indirectly, the course of our local union (Local 595 UAW) by pushing it closer to management. This incident was a spontaneous, four-day boycott of the company cafeteria. It was a minor rank and file rebellion against high prices and lousy food that we were forced to consume because of no alternatives.

The importance of this act was not so much that it forced the company to order a rollback of prices in the cafeteria but that it put both the local union and the local management on notice of what was to come. It would not have been unusual had the boycott started on the 2200-man night shift, which was because of its relative youth, it was considered "militant," but this started on the "conservative" day shift. The day shift was the union administration's stronghold—their key to control of the union. And now, even the "old timers" were acting up. The company tried to deal with it in its usual heavy-handed way by first threatening individuals who they blamed for starting it. Then, they threatened to close the cafeteria completely and then blame the union for not stopping the boycott.

The local union "leaders" reacted accordingly; they openly opposed the boycott saying it was illegal. Then they said it was started by "communists" on the second shift. This whole incident occurred while there was a power struggle going on within the local union. (Some renegade opportunists had split and formed the "action" ticket—the ranks rallied around it thinking it a vehicle for change.) The local union administration (unity ticket) attempted to crush the boycott by blaming it on their electoral enemies, the "action" ticket. The "action" ticket, not wanting to be blamed for this "commie plot," disavowed any knowledge of the boycott. Meanwhile, the ranks brought their lunch in brown bags. This was just one of many decisions of the rank and file which conflicted with decisions of the local and international union.

HOW TO LOSE A STRIKE

The Linden rank and file went into the strike in September of 1970 with spirit and solidarity. But this was soon dampened by the behavior of our local and International "leaders" who tried to weaken any display of militancy. When this did not work, they co-opted it. The ranks

WORKERS LEAVING NEW JERSEY GM PLANT

wanted to do mass picketing of **all** plant gates; GM screamed, and the union answered with a "strike school" to get members away from the gates. Later in the strike, the rank and file began talking about a mass demonstration in front of the plant, and the union responded by busing 500 members to New York in front of the GM building. At the end of the eleven-week strike (one extra week for local stuff), the rank and file returned to work badly beaten, hopeless and apathetic. Everyone knew what had happened; they just felt powerless to change it. The administration had kept everyone in line with the help of its alleged opposition. After the strike, those who criticized the leadership were called "reds" and "commies" by both Unity and Action. And then, with the help of the company, those who disagreed were disciplined and/or discharged.

Attempts to build a real rank and file caucus during 1971 and 1972 were doomed, because most active members were still feeling the sting of the collapse of "action." "Action" collapsed because it was run in "top-down" fashion, with primary concern placed on elections. This meant that the leaders of the ticket were offering no fight or change, except just before elections, when they entered into "leaflet wars" with the incumbents—each side saying "vote for me ; I will do a better job." Once again, the rank and file saw through the false promises and lack of program and this time, didn't vote!

One of the strongest forces of change during this period was the large number of women who were hired and used by GM as a divisive force. The women hated the conditions in the plant and the patronizing of the union officials and began to embarass the men by their willingness to fight back. This made it easier to raise issues instead of relying on popularity.

What had to be done first was to remove the stigma of "opportunist" or "ticket," so militants began discussing the issues which were real to the rank and file—speedups, more time off, harassment, and ways to deal with these problems.

In 1973, a few militants ran for committeemen, as independents, on these issues and won. The local union immediately began an intense "red-baiting" campaign. GM, needless to say, helped in every way by launching a vicious attack against all militants. The attack took the form of disciplinary layoffs and/or reassignment to "worse" jobs. This company union collusion resulted in a wildcat strike and the discharge of a committeeman and an alternate committeeman (this matter is still being appealed in the courts.)

Out of these struggles, a real rank and file caucus was born—the Linden Auto Workers. This caucus has been distributing a newsletter every month for one year. Decisions about the newsletter are made in meetings of the caucus. The Newsletter is designed to express the feelings of the rank and file and thus express the voice of the membership.

The Newsletter deals primarily with injustices that GM heaps upon the workers at Linden, because the UAW will not fight back. It also brings the truth to the membership about the local "leaders" and their "bosses" in the International union.

ONE BATTLE WON

Our most resounding victory thus far was over the local leadership and the International in the "three-year-term conspiracy." Our local has always had a one-year term of office for committeemen and shop-committeemen. There have been attempts to change this every few years. The most recent instance was an administration attempt for a two-year term in early 1973. This was done at a membership meeting where we able to knock down the

two-year proposal. When the local delegates returned from the Convention in June of 1974, they put out a leaflet which stated that the term of office for **all** officers had been extended to three years, including the committeemen and shop-committeemen. A petition to the International Excutive Board might or might not change this. This leaflet was followed by an edition of the local union newspaper in which an "editorial" implied that now we are stuck with the three-year term, we may as well make the best of it.

The Linden Auto Workers immediately began a campaign both in the plant and in their own newsletter to retain the one-year term and to demand a referendum vote on the issue. This was granted by the Executive Board and scheduled for October. Then the local administration pulled a classic "Reuther move." The International was trying to stuff a three-year term down the members' throats—them members were hostile—and so our local bureaucrats who were trained on the skillfull slippery knee of Walter Reuther—came out on the left side of the International by appealing for a **two-year** term for committeemen and shop-committeemen.

Once again, the rank and file member—the backbone of the union—showed his and her strength and solidarity with each other.

The vote:
International—three year term: 66 votes
Local Leaders—two-year term: 78 votes
Rank and File—one-year term: 956 votes.

Douglas Stevens
for the Linden Auto Workers
UAW Local 595

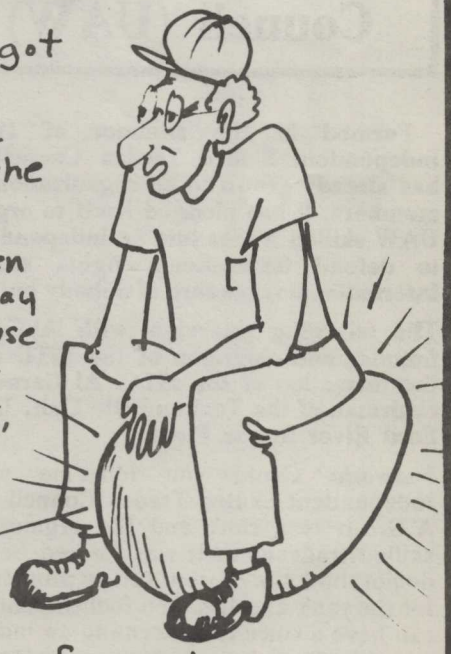
[Doug Stevens was a committeeman at the Linden GM plant until his entire shift was laid off. He is a member of L.A.W. (Linden Auto Workers) at Local 595.]

THE OLE PHILOSOPHER SEZ:

Seems every time somebody got an idee how to solve our problems, the Prez sez — "We can't ask the Company to do that! Don't kill the Goose that lays the Golden Eggs!"

Well, goose is cousin to the chicken an' every hen house I've seed hens lay the eggs. But they don't keep 'em cause they only work there. The farmer gives 'em corn an' a place to roost, then takes the eggs for hisself.

I feel kin to the geese an' chickens. Cooped up in a Factory working for chicken feed an' waiting for the axe. I won't kill myself, but I don't know about the farmer!



SKILLED TRADES ORGANIZE TO FIGHT

An Interview with Al Gardner, chairman of the Independent Skilled Trades Council (UAW)

Formed in the summer of 1974, the Independent Skilled Trades Council [UAW] has already grown to an organization of 3000 members. It has pledged itself to organize all UAW skilled trades into an independent force to defend tradesmen's rights since "the international takes care of nobody but itself."

The following interview with Al Gardner, a founder and chairman of the ISTC examines the formation of the ISTC. Al Garner is also chairman of the Tool and Die Unit, Local 600, Ford River Rogue Plant.

Network: Could you tell me what the Independent Skilled Trades Council-UAW is?
A.G.: It is a rank and file organization for skilled tradesmen. It was formed because we do not think the present set-up provides a voice for the rank and file. We feel the only way we can have a voice is by forming an independent council of rank and filers who have some influence on what happens to themselves.
Network: What were the events that led to the formation of the council?
A.G.: We had been discussing forming a council for quite a long time. It came to a head in 1973 when the Ford skilled tradesmen rejected the national agreement by 20,000 to 6,000 and the UAW leadership rejected the veto and declared the contract ratified. We went through the union procedure by going to the Public Review Board and the courts. We lost both cases. Then we knew for sure that we had to form and organization to protect our rights.
NETWORK: What were the problems of skilled tradesmen that would lead them to form a separate organization?
A.G.: The feeling has always been there but nothing had provoked the tradesmen to act. What happened in 1973 made them realize they had to do something. They realized we needed an organization controlled by the rank and file and not the International. There had been a similar organization back in the 1950's called the Wayne County Skilled Trades Council. The difference was when that organization started making their demands on

the UAW and raising too much hell, the UAW cancelled that organization. The UAW leadership could do that because they controlled the finances of the organization and so in 1958 they locked the doors of the council and disbanded it. They can't do that to this organization because it is independently financed and we control the organization. So they can't shut it off like they did before.

UAW LEADERSHIP AND THE TRADES

Network: In the past skilled tradesmen have usually gotten better treatment than production workers from the UAW. Do you think this has come to an end with last year's events at Ford?

A.G.: I don't believe that sweet relationship ever existed. I know traditionally that the tradesmen have been a louder voice in the union than production. There are a lot of good reasons for that because it is easier for tradesmen to organize to put pressure on the union and the company. Production workers can be screwed over a lot easier than the trades.

There has always been the feeling among tradesmen that they have not been listened to because they are a minority. I do not believe they are screwed because they are a minortiy. Woodcock made it very clear at the Public Review Board. He was asked by someone there what would have happened if it had been a majority of production workers who had turned down the contract. He said that if the International had thought it was not in the best interests of production workers then they would have vetoed their rejection also. The International has taken on the belief that they are the union and they know what is best for the workers.

Network: What does it mean when you say the council is an independent council within the UAW?

A.G.: It is not an organization that wants to separate from the UAW. It is an organization that wants to work within the UAW to bring back democracy to the UAW. We want to make sure that the skilled trades and all workers have their rights. Not only the right of skilled tradesmen to reject a contract but also the right of all workers to elect all international officers by referendum vote and to give all workers the right to strike without prior authorization from the International.

Network: How did you organize the ISTC?

A.G.: We started in the Detroit area back in September. So far it has been a matter of organizing. Now we have over 3000 members. Although they are mostly in the Detroit area we now have various contacts around the country.

We have gone to the Ford Sub Council in Cincinnatti and to the Skilled Trades Conference in Houston. We have also put out two issues of the newspaper. We have a policy statement. Outside of the Detroit area it is a matter of attending various conferences and the word passing through our contacts.

Network: What has the UAW leadership done in reaction to the formation of the ISTC?

A.G.: I underestand there was a meeting of the secondary leadership at Chrysler trying to convince the committeemen that a council like this was not necessary. The first real attack came in Houston. They are going to try and do

Ford Mustangs leaving River Rouge plant.

two things—either destroy it through attacks or else try and take it over. But that is going to be difficult because we are going to run it democratically. We are going to have a referendum vote of all of its officers.

Network: What did the ISTC do at the Houston conference?
A.G.: When we first started we were primarily concerned with what happened with the Ford contract and we were mostly concerned with trying to change Article 19, Sec 3 of the constitution. Since then things have changed considerably and we have very heavy unemployment and so our direction has changed since that time.

We went down to Houston to primarily organize and call a meeting of the skilled tradesmen to let them know what this council is about. I think we have been pretty effective within the UAW because the first thing that happened in Texas was that Fraser attacked the ISTC in a resolution, saying that the council was unnecessary and that the problem with a skilled trades council such as ours is that it is controlled too much by the rank and file. The rank and file, he said, are not knowledgeable about bargaining and take no part in bargaining and therefore the ISTC is useless.

A delegate from the Detroit area attacked the council on the question of where the money came from. He said it came from Russian pulpwood and Chinese rice! But the money comes from voluntary dues which are a dollar a month paid by the 3000 members of the council It is not unusual to have that kind of red-baiting. That goes on with anybody who opposes the International Union. They use it like the companies when the companies used to use it against the unions during the organizing drives.

They attacked us and we responded to their attacks. After that we supported the program put forth by the International in helping the unemployed, although we do not think it went far enough. We are supporting it, particularly the rally in Washington Feb. 5. What we intend to do is continue this organizing throughout the country.
Network: What is the program of the ISTC?
A.G.: First of all, all International officers and reps must be elected by referendum vote. That way the workers will directly have an effect on who leads them. We have to organize the skilled tradesmen so that we can change the constitution to make article 19 (sec 3) meaningful. Skilled tradesmen, or any group of workers, have to be able to say to the union or the company, "We are not going to take that contract" and that rejection will stand. We believe that if any group of workers reject a contract then they have the right to strike without prior authorization from the International.

In the plants we have to insist on the rights of skilled tradesmen in the areas of subcontracting and the farming out of work. This is our biggest problem, and we have been promised for years that this union is going to solve this problem. We have to insist and fight for that so work does not go out to scab shops. We have to insist, as we have been promised for many years, that we get paid the same wages as tradesmen in the construction industry.

BLACKS AND THE SKILLED TRADES

Network: Is the ISTC attempting to open up the trades to blacks and other minorities and is tr trying to forge links with production workers?
A.G.: There is no doubt that minorities have been discriminated against with regards to entering the skilled trades. Especially the job shops are mostly white skilled tradesmen.

Some say we are forming this separated elite council and to hell with everyone else. That's not true. Many of us involved in the council insisted at the convention in 1968 and 1972 that the production workers themselves form a production council where the rank and file have the voice and which they control. If production has theirs and we have ours, then we can work together.

The question of minorities entering the skilled trades is part of our program. Any skilled jobs should be available through the apprenticeship program and not through upgrading which dilutes the skilled trades. Our program says that the trades should be open to UAW workers and not pople off the street who are friends and relatives of the foremen.

Network: Are there any blacks in the council?

A.G.: We have some black tradesmen but it is a small percentage. Let's face it, they are a very small percentage of the trades.

Network: What do you think about the movement for a separate skilled trades local that developed last year in Detroit Chrysler plants?

A.G.: That is not the answer. A lot of guys say let's have a separate local. The I.S.S.T. tried that. The answer is not a separate union or local. If you run away into another organization and they have the same set-up, you are no better off. You have to change it in the UAW. The problem with a separate local is that if you get too much out of line, all they have to do is send in an administrator and put you into trusteeship. Then you have lost everything. The only answer is a separate independent council that controls its own finances and newspaper so that the International cannot take you over.

UNEMPLOYMENT HITS THE TRADES

Network: How have skilled tradesmen been hit by the layoffs and what is the ISTC going to do about the layoffs?

A.G.: Nationally skilled tradesmen I suppose have been hit in the same percentage as production workers. At Fords, we have been hit very hard. In the tool and die union, we have 63% of the people laid off. Ford's canceled the 1976 model. We need a complete mobilization of all unemployed workers to put the pressure both on the union and the government to put people back to work.

Network: Do you have any relationship with other rank and file groups or caucuses in the UAW? Do you have any relationship with the UNC?

A.G.: Yes. Quite a few of the members belong to the UNC. Fraser says it is one and the same outfit, or the same old people with the same old program. That is not true. It is independent from any organization, any caucus or political organization. The council is willing to work with any group in the UAW who wants the same ends.

Network: What do you see as the future of the ISTC?

A.G.: A lot depends on what happends with the economy. Our job is to organize tradesmen into the council so that we can send delegates to the next convention. But our biggest job is to organize the unemployed and all workers because that is where the change is going to come from. □

Join Today

Dues for the Independent Skilled Trades Council [UAW] will be one dollar per month. This is a voluntary organization with the UAW open to all members in the skilled trades. There is no legal financial obligation associated with joining the Council. Give applications and dues to your local representative or mail to: P.O. Box 135 East Detroit, Michigan, 48021.

I want to join the Independent Skilled Trades Council [UAW].

Name.....

Address.....

City.....**State**.....

Local union.....**Phone**.....

Shop.....**Union office?**.....

Trade?.....**Shift?**.....

Militants Fight To Build

Local 235

The lay-off crisis hit Chevy Gear and Axle in Detroit a lot later than most other plants here. Many workers felt that we would get by without being affected by the disaster that was occurring around us. Then on January 10th, 725 workers were laid off indefinitely bringing the total to nearly 1,500. Plus, it is clear that this is just the start. No one knows how far back it will go.

People are afraid. No one can remember layoffs like this at Chevy before. The plant has been known for years to have good job security. Now the impossible is happening.

Luckily, our local, Local 235, has established an Unemployed Committee. A motion was put forward by a member of the Gear and Axle Justice Committee at the November general membership meeting, and it passed. Quorums at meetings are rare because the local discourages membership participation. But this time the leadership wanted to get through some by-law changes to increase expenses for union business. This kind of stuff is what interests them. But, the Justice Committee took advantage of this to get something passed to aid the membership.

The Justice Committee is a group of rank and file fighters that formed around an anti-administration slate of delegates for the June 1974 Convention in Los Angeles. In June, we started putting out our newsletter called **Justice**. We reported on the convention and led a successful fight to hold our local committeemen to a 2 year instead of 3 year term.

We are now attempting to build the unemployed committee into something where the rank and file members, both laid-off and working, can begin to have some effect on the running of our union. It is an open committee and will be electing officers. The most active members so far are members of the Justice Committee. We are making sure through the distribution of literature that the membership is being kept aware. We have been down at the Local to attempt to answer any questions and to help solve any problems unemployed members may have. We have been participating in the United National Caucus City-Wide Unemployed Committee that is operating out of Local 961. They have been holding classes to help us get information about social services so we can give this information out to our membership.

Our first official meeting will be Sunday, January 19th. At that meeting we will mainly discuss the February 5th March on Washington. Our Local so far is only planning to send one bus of 36 people! We feel many more than that should go and would like to go. Therefore, we proposed a raffle to help raise money for another bus.

Our main problem is staying in touch with those members who are laid-off. We want to send out a letter to all such members asking them to mail in their address and telephone number if they wish to participate in the Unemployed Committee or the March

So far the local leadership has been cooperative. They seem to have decided they would look bad if they blocked our constructive proposals to help laid-off members and to organize against the lay-offs. Our group continues to be in opposition to both the local leadership and the International. But we will always cooperate fully on any program beneficial to the membership. We hope our future planned efforts will not be in vain and that this cooperation will continue. We know this will depend on whether we can get rank-and-filers to take an active part. This is the only thing that will put pressure on our union leaders to meet our needs. □

W. Weinberg, Local 235

Unemployed Committees

Local 51

The struggle for a real unemployed committee in Local 51 goes on. Over 4500 of the 8000 members of the Local are laid off. The Local represents Chrysler's Lynch Road Assembly and Mound Road Engine plants. Both plants have been hit hard by the recession.

Organizing for an unemployed committee began last fall. Members of the Lynch Road United National Caucus and other groups began a petition drive calling for the formation of an unemployed committee which would be open to all members of the Local. This committee would democratically elect its own leadership and would attempt to organize the laid off members of the Local to fight the layoffs. Over 1000 workers signed the petitions.

The Local Executive Board rejected the rank and file's wishes and set up their own community services committee staffed by bureaucrats and flunkies. The struggle came to a head at the Dec. 8 Local meeting when rank and filers made a motion for a democratic action oriented unemployed committee. Seeing that he was outnumbered, Local President Janette adjourned the meeting while there was a motion on the floor. He walked out showing his lack of concern with the 4500 laid off members of the Local.

U.N.C.L.E.

But the rank and filers did not go home. Instead they formed U.N.C.L.E., the Unemployed Council in Exile. UNCLE members signed up and moved to work with the official Community Services Committee as much as possible. UNCLE members are also working with the UNC city-wide unemployed committee. A newsletter has been published by UNCLE.

The rapidly deteriorating economic crisis caused the local bureaucrats to move somewhat leftward. On January 9 Janette called a Community Services Committee meeting and invited all members of UNCLE. About 80 people showed up. Janette gave a militant sounding speech on the Washington rally.

FIGHT FOR JOBS!

The rank and filers welcomed this opening. We began pushing for the Local to call a mass meeting to build for the Washington march and to decide on a program for the march. Janette claimed that we could not make any decisions because this was not an official meeting. Three days later at the regular membership meeting he changed his mind and claimed that there had been a meeting of the Community Services Committee. He also said that the Community Services Committee had been expanded to 40 members. He never said which 40.

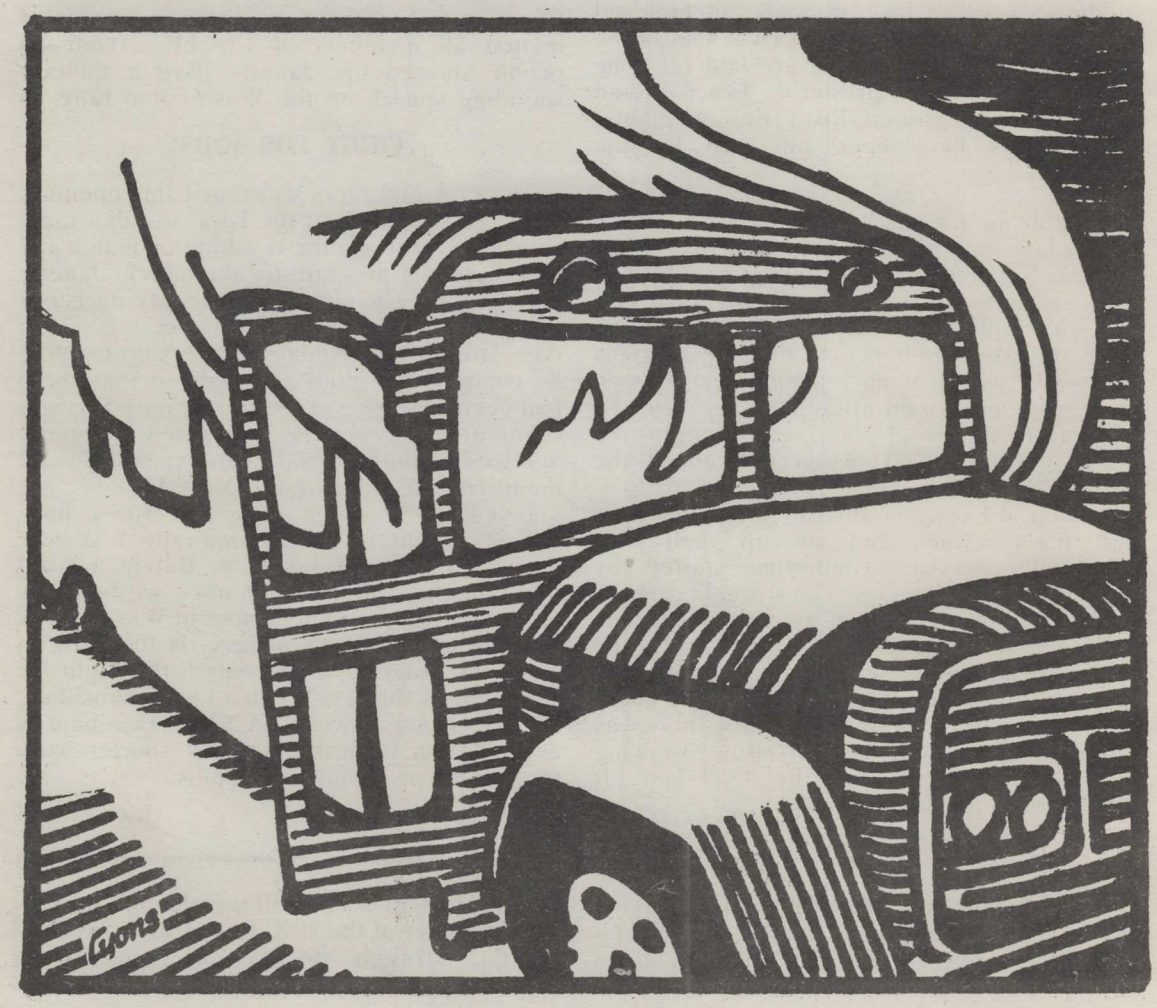
UNCLE and other rank and filers have moved to build the Washington rally. It is clear that the UAW will not do it. But in a Local that's been hit as badly as ours, we feel it is necessary to have a big turnout in Washington. Just as important, we believe, is the need to make the program of this march the **Fight for Jobs.** This is the key. We don't want subsidies. Welfare means poverty. A $300 tax rebate is only chicken feed. We need a shorter work week at full pay to guarantee jobs. □

Rick Eusani

[Rick Eusani is a laid off member of Local 51. As a member of the UNC he has been involved in the struggle to get an unemployed committee and is working with UNCLE.]

OPINION: DAVID McCULLOUGH, LOCAL 869

THE BOSTON BUSING CRISIS



The school busing crisis in Boston has changed the whole busing debate. Before, we heard about neighborhood schools, the expense, the inconvenience, the danger to children. Boston stripped off this mask of worry and showed the face of fear—racism. The cry "No niggers in Southie" was backed up by violence on black school kids and parents. The issue today is racism and its tool, segregation.

1. Defeat Racism.

I believe that all **Network** readers will face similiar situations in the near future. What do we do? First, we must defeat racism at its core. Racism is not so deep-dyed in people's minds that we need a bunch of professors and commissions and programs to deal with it. Every day autoworkers in Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis, New Jersey, Oakland and elsewhere work together on a common material and plot against a common enemy—the boss. Should we leave the factory and go home to punch it out with each other, black against white, over education? Ridiculous! At its core, racism is nothing more than a rallying cry, a way of organizing people for some other purpose. In Boston, the purpose is to get the ruling class off the hook for the economic and social mess we're in by offering a scapegoat.

Our first task is to break up every attempt to rally people around racist slogans. This is done in the streets. It was done in Boston with an anti-racist mass demonstration at the city center. The white working people of South Boston ("Southie") could not be rallied for a counter-demonstration which segregationist Louise Day Hicks had planned for the next day. Their fears and prejudices did not run deep enough to take a bus into the city and risk a confrontation.

2. Unite for Equality.

The next balance of forces on the street may go the other way. In the meantime, the real battle goes on—the fight for people's minds and loyalties. That brings up the second issue—busing. I don't think busing is the best solution. But I defend it. There are better ways, just as there are better ways to improve the lot of an autoworker than becoming a foreman. But so long as there are foremen, blacks and other oppressed groups damn well better have a shot at those jobs.

I am talking about equal opportunity. This is a democratic demand. There is something special about democracy. It is either here right now, or it is nowhere. There is always a better way to reach any goal than what is going on at the moment. Do you want quality education? There are lots of ideas about how to get there, but they are all for tomorrow. The democratic demand for equal education is for today.

The fact about schools is that some are OK and most are rotten. The answer is money, but the wealthy folk who control the school boards and treasuries have not even **talked** about fronting the amount of money needed, much

Racism finds expression in South Boston

less done it. In the meantime, there are better schools and crummy schools—living insults to equality. How do we handle it?

Well, how would we handle a similar situation on the job? On every line there are some jobs nobody wants. The foreman either finds a sucker or uses those jobs to punish people who cross him. Or he picks on some minority group—new hires, blacks, women, hillbillies, whatever. If the majority of workers go along with this, all it does is give the foreman more power over them. He can use the bad job as a threat.

The Boston school board has used the same threat tactic against working-class whites in Southie. To keep them from demanding better schools for all, and uniting with black parents to win them, the Board has set blacks and whites against each other. The fact that schools in the ghetto are even worse than the ones in Southie scares the whites into staying "in their place"—and liking it! Their place is two cuts about nothing. The threat of white violence is supposed to keep the black parents happy in **their** place.

But what happens when workers on the job are left to divide jobs up among themselves? Like as not we rotate the jobs. Not because we are noble, just because that is the only system that gives us any justice for ourselves. Democracy comes naturally when workers are left to make their own decisions.

We have learned in the plants that the only way improve conditions is worker unity. The guy we let the foreman shit on today is tomorrow's scab. We can carry this lesson to the schools. There is no way we can win the fight for quality without winning the fight for equality. When everybody wants a piece of the action, and the action is slim pickings, nobody's piece is secure.

Looking back, I have outlined two steps. 1. Smash racism as a rallying point. People cannot get together and reason when racists control the streets and the talk. 2. Rally people around the slogans of equality and unity.

Step 3 is finding the people to do this.

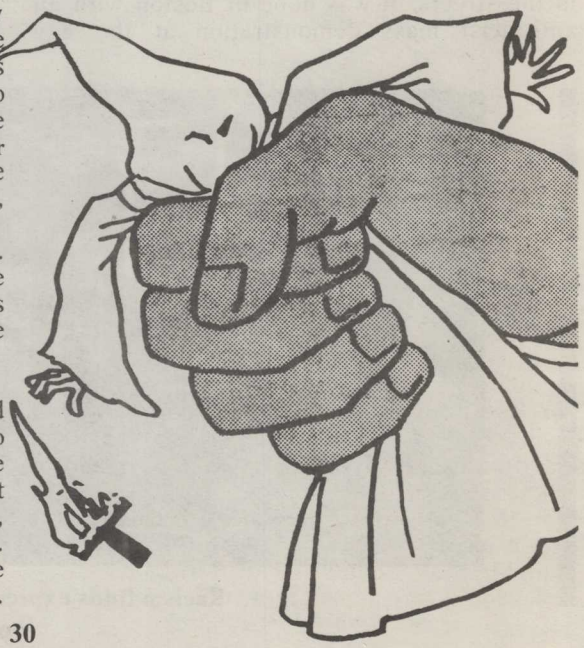
The politicians and NAACP of Boston told people to rely on the courts, cops, and troops to enforce integration. This is no solution. These institutions are not even serious about enforcing the law. If the courts were serious, they would not bus black kids into Southie. They would bus both the blacks and Southie kids to the wealthy suburbs around Boston. The cops have proved they are not serious by refusing to protect black children and parents against mob violence. Both cops and troops have been sent into the black community time and again to "protect" the citizens and ended up terrorizing them instead.

3. Unions Must Lead

There is only one place in American life where black and white are united for the benefit of all. That is the unions. We must force the unions to lead this fight, educating, mobilizing and uniting their members. In the union we have the numbers and muscle needed to guarantee the safety of the streets and schools. Most of all, we have the motive. Autoworkers are not wealthy people. We know that the only way of guaranteeing a decent education for our own kids is forcing the government to provide a decent education for all kids. □

[Dave McCullough is a laid-off member of Local 869 and an active member of the UNC.]

Network believes that unity in action requires thorough discussion beforehand. We urge other **Network** readers to write in their own opinions on this subject so the whole issue can be aired in public.



FOOD STAMPS

As a member of the Survival Committee of the United National Caucus Unemployed Committee, I would like to share some of the things we have found out about food stamps. This is part of our program of learning about services available to laid-off workers.

There are two pamphlets that are valuable. UAW militants who want to help other workers with food stamps should get them. They are:

1) **Food Stamps Made The Difference.** This pamphlet includes eligibility charts. You can get it from the UAW Community Services Department, East Jefferson Ave., Detroit, MI 48214. (phone 313-526-5291)

2) **Guide to the Food Stamp Program.** This booklet tells you how to beat the red tape. You can get it from Food Research Action Center, 25 W. 43rd St., New York, NY 10036 (phone 212-354-7866)

You should tell people that when they go to the food stamp office to apply, the government will demand they bring the following papers to back up their claim:

1. I.D. of the person applying.

2. Social Security cards for everybody in the household between 18 and 65.

3. Marriage Certificate if your wife or husband is in the household; birth certificates for the children.

4. Receipts and pay stubs to back up expected income during a month. These include stubs of copies for wages, unemployment benefits, SUB benefits, Social Security, pensions, veterans' benefits, interest, rent income, workmens' compensation, sick pay, and public assistance (Welfare). Try to bring 2—4 weeks worth of these stubs.

5. Proof of money and property. Cash, bank books, stocks and bonds, value of and title to cars if more than one in the household, proof of ownership of boats, trailers, campers, and such, titles to any property you own except where you live.

6. Bills, receipts, and cancelled checks for expenses:

a. Medical, dental and prescriptions,

b. House payments, rent, taxes, insurance, and 2—3 months worth of utility bills,

c. Child support, tuition, and other unusual expenses.

"EXCESS RESOURCES"

This is the main catch for cheating working people. If you have more than $1,500 worth of savings, stocks or bonds, they won't give you food stamps—until you spend the extra. If you have more than one car, you have to sell it to get stamps—unless you can convince the government worker that it is vital (like one person in the family having to get a job and another going to the doctor every day). You also have to sell off motorcycles, trailers, and things like that, as well as property that you don't live on.

What you can keep is your house, furnishings, clothes, one car, private or special schooling, higher education and up to $1,500.

Finally, workers should be told that when applying, be sure to write down the name of the case workers who is handling your case. Once you are in, food stamp authorization cards are mailed to your house every two weeks. But if the card is late or incorrect, you can save yourself trouble by giving the name of your caseworker when you call to complain. □

Susan Yeghissian

[Susan Yeghissian is a laid-off member of Local 235 and belongs to the Justice Committee.]

St. Louis

[continued from page 9]

On January 26th, Bluestone visited the plant, not to force management to live up to the agreement, but to demand: "What the hell are you doing, writing all these grievances?" The International Union that day proclaimed a "moratorium" on grievances and told committeemen, "If you have a problem, take it to the foreman. He'll cooperate 100%" Four committeemen said, "We're not having any more of this shit," and resigned their jobs in disgust on the spot.

GM PRESSES ITS ATTACK

On March 26, 1973 GM pressed the attack further. Still not making production at 57½ cars/hour, they reduced the speed to 48 on the passenger line and laid off 750 more workers. Even the day shift couldn't keep up and for the next month the whole plant operated an average 9 hours per week. Hurting more than ever, a membership meeting April 13th voted 400—4 to call for an all GMAD strike. The next day Bluestone replied, "Bail yourself out." "No more Norwoods," Leonard Woodcock said, "St. Louis will get no help if it goes on strike." Local 25, denied aid in a situation where its members were losing thousands of dollars and getting no Short Work Week Benefits, where 10,255 grievances had been amassed in 5 months, voted 500—50 to withdraw all funds from the UAW.

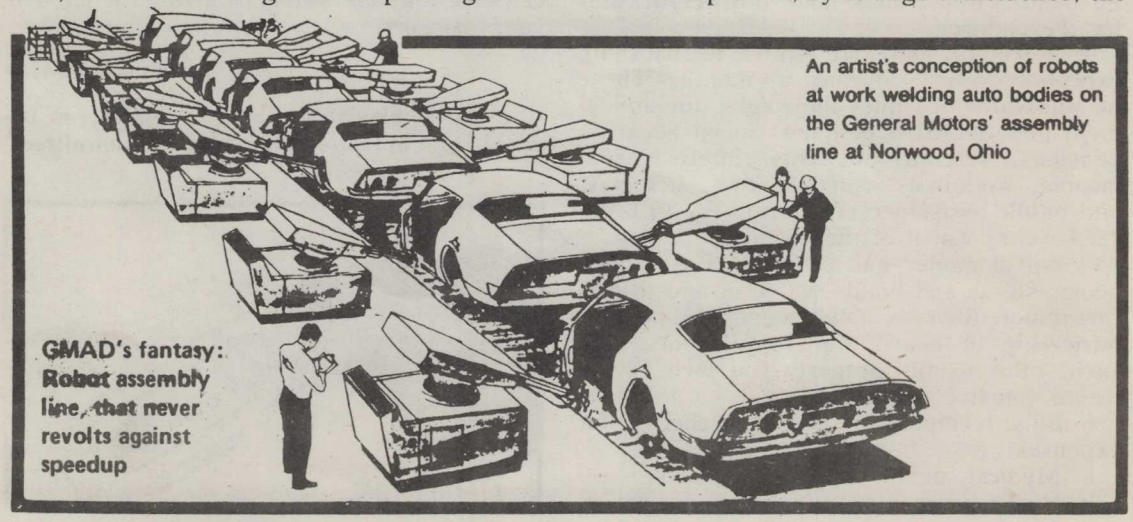
This brought swift action. Four International reps flew to St. Louis. As soon as they left, the plant chairman and two shop committeemen were fired and some of the rest put on notice for "Falsifying time cards." But GM returned to the original line speed, called back the most recent layoff, and ended the short work week.

The 1973 contract solved nothing in St. Louis. Discipline and speed-up continued under the weakened shop committee. The grievances remained, as did the two agreements (seniority, overtime equalization, etc) dating back to pre-GMAD. By the end of 1973, 1500 people less were making the same production as before October 1971.

In February 1974 the 2nd shift at passenger which had fought so tenaciously against GMAD was laid off. Although black workers were only 24% of the workforce at the plant prior to the layoff, they made up 48% of the over 2,000 workers laid off.

GMAD MOVES ON TO CORVETTE

GMAD then moved their attack to the Corvette area. On April 1st they increased the line speed from 8 jobs an hours to ten with no extra manpower. The Corvette workers wrote grievances but immediately moved beyond that. On April 5th, by strange coincidence, the



An artist's conception of robots at work welding auto bodies on the General Motors' assembly line at Norwood, Ohio

GMAD's fantasy: Robot assembly line, that never revolts against speedup

entire second shift was sick simultaneously. Management alleged a "work stoppage" and assessed 124 penalties for violation of Paragraph 117 (no-strike clause) from one week to discharge in spite of the fact that all those penalized had valid doctors' notes for their illnesses. Rebellion continued in the face to this vicious action, and Corvette continued to fail to get the desired production.

But the problems were not unique to Corvette. By June of 1974 an unprecedented 18,000 grievances were in the procedure at St. Louis, including and incredible 3,500 discipline cases. On the initiative of the 2nd shift Corvette committeeman Mosley and Rod (Hippie) Galey a strike vote was taken and on June 28th St. Louis GMAD went down on an official strike, to settle all grievance and achieve one consolidated agreement.

Management, which would not prove its case against any of the 124 workers disciplined for being sick on April 5th, announced that no settlement was possible until the union picked out those who were guilty of concerted action and work stoppage. Mosley and Galey, of course, maintained the innocence of all who had certified doctors' notes. The union leadership told Mosley to pick out some of the workers to be sacrificial lambs, but Mosley refused.

LOCAL LEADERSHIP AND INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP SELL OUT STRIKE

After a month on strike the shop committeemen began to spread the rumor that no progress was possible because "Mosley and Galey refuse to compromise their grievances." As several other plants which had struck after St. Louis returned to work, the pressure increased. Only a handful of the 34 committeemen fought for a decent settlement. Then shop committeeman Willie Morganfield, without even consulting either the workers involved or their representatives Mosley and Galey, signed an agreement which fingered 55 of the workers involved, locking the discipline on their records for four years. He then signed a manpower agreement settling for ten of the thirty-six people needed on each shift in Corvette. This did not however settle a single one of the Paragraph 78 work standards grievances.

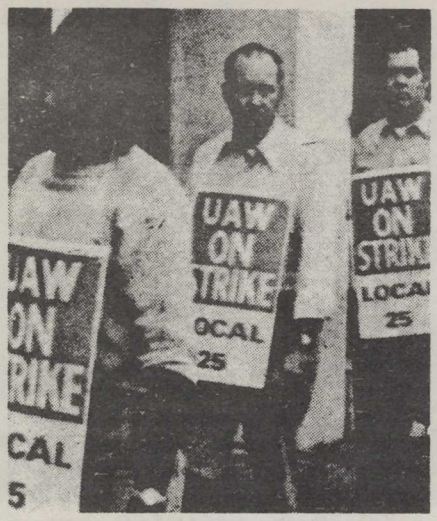
On August 28, Bluestone met with the Local 25 Executive Board. He challenged them that none of them had the guts to take on Mosley, and threatened the local leadership with trusteeship unless they moved quickly to end the strike. Two days later, Local officials announced agreement. Once again, there had been no consolidation of Fisher Body and Chevrolet agreements. Once again large numbers of disciplines, including discharges dating all the way back to 1971 and work standards grievances remained unresolved. With both the international and local leaderships asserting that nothing more could be won, the Corvette workers were outvoted as the local decided to return to work by a margin of 1039 to 400.

On the line in a GMAD plant

In the wake of membership demoralization, local officials began a campaign to drive Mosley out of the plant. Morganfield threatened him saying, "Communists and junkies get bumped off," and pulled a gun on him attempting intimidation. Word spread through the plant that Mosley was a radical troublemaker who was "responsible for costing every Local 25 member 9 weeks of pay for nothing!" As if Mosley were responsible for the sellout! Galey was attacked too.

TAKING THE OFFENSIVE

At first it seemed as if people were too weary to fight any more. But as the harassment of



Striking St. Louis GMAD workers

their leaders increased they rebounded instinctively to their defense. And with that sit down October 17, they moved back to the offense. Their experience showed in the sit down not only because they arrived at the correct tactic, but also because they were aware of the importance of their struggle. A Corvette workers' leaflet distributed after their victory entitled "The Rebirth of the Union" recalled "We must once again visualize that the union began with our brothers and sisters sitting down on the line and being viciously attacked by management. Now today, when workers must fight for the same things in the same way they are being attacked by both management **and** the union leadership which tries to divide them."

GM was furious and tried to interview the signers of the leaflet, the Corvette 2nd shift committeemen and alternates. When they refused, as is their right by Paragraph 76A of the Agreement, Mosley was indefinitely suspended. One hundred and twenty five workers gathered outside the plant in the rain at lunchtime to determine a response. The sentiment at first favored walking out, but it was soon recognized that a walkout might only play into GM's hands. However "morale" was so low that when people returned to the plant after lunch they couldn't keep their jobs out of the hole. The company slowed down the line and it was still impossible to get production out. The suspension was converted to a 30 day discipinary layoff, and Corvette workers estimate that during that time the company lost $1,200,000 due to "poor morale." The reject area which was nearly empty at the end of October overflowed with more than 180 cars by the end of November. Management endured this retaliation docilely fearful of lowering morale further.

WHEN WORKERS UNITE; THEY ARE INVINCIBLE

The General Motors workers in St. Louis have won some battles and lost many, but they have refused to surrender. They have proved that workers will continue to fight when they have confidence in their leadership, and that leaders can win that confidence by relying on the action of the rank and file and resisting all pressures from above to sell them out. They have shown how to learn from struggle, never to believe anything the company says, to create solidarity so that "an injury to one is an injury to all," how to choose the time and ways of battle so that casualties can be minimized, and the necessity for workers to unite on an ever wider scale in order to face corporations which are international. Most vividly they hae seen that it has been the ranks who have at every stage pushed the fight forward, and the officials who have held it back, that workers will not succeed until they win rank and file control of the union on a fighting program in the workers' interests, and sweep away the whole bureaucracy and its lackeys who care only for their own privileges.

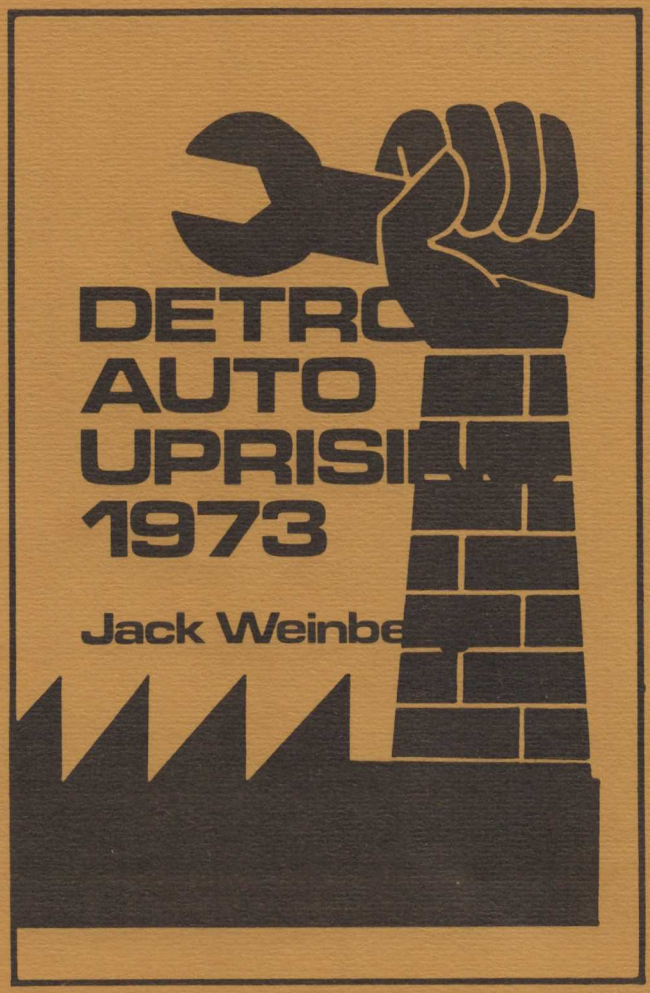
And without ceasing to resist speedup and harassment, they are launching new struggles. Organizing against unemployment is underway with the central demand: 30 hours work for 40 hours pay. Full guaranteed SUB and no overtime with workers laid off are also demanded. Workers at St. Louis GMAD know better than anyone else that these necessities cannot be achieved at one plant, but they also know that where one starts, others can follow. As one Corvette worker said, "When workers unite; they are invincible!" □

[Nate Mosley has been a committeeman at the St. Louis GMAD plant for the last several years.]

In the summer of 1973 important strikes hit three of Chrysler's Detroit plants. One involved a sit-in that closed Jefferson Assembly. One was a wildcat at the Detroit Forge plant. And one was a strike at Mack Avenue Stamping that was broken by a 1000-person goon squad of UAW officials. This goon squad was the most vicious but by no means the only anti-union action by the UAW International leadership. No UAW member can afford to misunderstand the events of 1973.

This highly readable pamphlet by an active participant of the struggles describes what happened, points out the reasons and begins a discussion of what is necessary to change this. Order your copy now!

Single copies 50c plus 20c postage and handling. Write for bulk rates.



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